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YALTA'S MUTED MUSIC

THE World Conference which is to inaugurate a century of security and prosperity for the common man has begun against a background of chequered light and shade. The military picture is bright. Berlin is falling to the massive assault of the Red Army, Dresden is encircled, and Russian troops are on the point of contact with the Americans on the Upper Elbe. Not only so; swinging southwards, the combined forces under Patton, Patch and De Lattre have carried swiftly the line of the Danube, outflanking and disintegrating the enemy's defences in Northern Bavaria. The war in Europe is not yet over: apart from the probability of a last stand by S.S. troops round Prague and in the Austrian mountains, we have still to deal with substantial enemy forces in Denmark, Norway and in the "island" of Western Holland, where progressive flooding separates the unhappy Dutch from their liberators. But the speed with which the remnants of the Wehrmacht are being cut up into isolated "pockets" argues against the likelihood of any of the Redoubts, north or south, offering resistance as protracted as was at one time feared. The guns may be silent by Midsummer.

Shall we, by then, be able to say with sincerity that the delegates of the 45 nations assembled at San Francisco have laid the foundations on which the ruins of war-shattered Europe can be rebuilt in an atmosphere of confidence, mutual trust and genuine collaboration? If the high hopes raised by the Crimea Conference are not to prove a dangerous delusion, and if the projected edifice of security and world order is to have any reality, there is need for clear thinking and plain words. The harsh facts are that, even before their joint military effort has been crowned by final victory, the Big Three—on whose continued purposive unity the whole framework of Dumbarton Oaks depends—have split on an issue too fundamental to be resolved completely by any *ad hoc* compromise. The deadlock over Poland, a rift which the abortive meeting in Washington of the three Foreign Secretaries failed to close, is symptomatic of a divergence which nullifies the assumption of Big Power unity implicit in the present project for a World Authority.

We have expressed, and adhere to the opinion that, in their interpretation of the ambiguous, hurriedly concocted Yalta formula, the Russians are formally correct. If words mean anything, the "agreement" (if such it can be called) was that the Lublin Government should be the nucleus of a Provisional Administration broadened by the inclusion of representatives of other democratic parties. The impasse "on procedure" reached in Moscow by the Committee of Three arose from the insistence of London and Washington that the Lublin Government must be superseded by an all-party Cabinet formed *de novo*. The sequel still lacks clarity; but, so far as we can judge, the Russians—with characteristic (not to say unfriendly) secretiveness—endeavoured unilaterally to "broaden" the Lublin Government by inviting the Peasant leader, M. Witos, and other Resistance representatives, to join it. For reasons unexplained that effort failed. Thereupon Marshal Stalin impatiently renewed his request that the Lublin Government should be invited to San Francisco, underlining his support of that Government by personally signing with it a solemn 20-year treaty of alliance. The Anglo-American reaction has been to present Moscow with a reiterated and, so far, unalterable refusal to accord the Lublin Government recognition.

Now, to argue that the inclusion of, say, M. Romer or M. Mikolajczyk in the Polish Government would, of itself, be a serious threat to Poland's mighty Eastern neighbour is as unrealistic as to accept the pretence that Mr. Churchill and President Truman are genuinely interested in the fine shades of Polish democracy. The facts, not unnoticed in Moscow, are that in Greece and Belgium Mr. Churchill, with the State Department's tacit approval, did not scruple to trample on popular forces in order to stifle a movement which might have proved either pro-Russian or inimical to the capitalist social order whose preservation is a No. 1 Anglo-American objective. Similarly, Marshal Stalin, in his sphere of influence, has no hesitation in riding roughshod over the "sacred principles" of democracy in his determination to see, in countries adjoining the U.S.S.R., Governments whose friendship towards the Socialist Sixth of the World is unquestionable. After Russian experience in Rumania he may well have reached the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that no bourgeois party, even with a "progressive" label, can be relied on not to intrigue with a (supposedly hostile) West against Russian interests.

There, in short, is the crux. Unless the Governments of London and Washington can disabuse Moscow of the idea that they are conspiring against the U.S.S.R., and unless Marshal Stalin can persuade Mr. Churchill and President Truman that their fears of Russian "neo-Imperialism" are baseless, the quarrel over Poland—ludicrous in its futility, were it not so tragic—will be repeated wherever the "interests" of the Big Three meet. That may mean the division of Europe into two blocs—a division highly detrimental to the prospects of the integral economic reconstruction which is the Continent's prime necessity. We do not yet wholly despair of the chances of Russian collaboration with the West on practical problems of restoring means of livelihood in devastated countries; indeed, the U.S.S.R., we believe, is inclined to view favourably the idea of becoming an active member in the International Labour Organisation. But, politically, the question which to-day confronts the statesmen at San Francisco is how far it is possible to base a World Authority of United Nations on a fundamental disunity, not between the common peoples, but between the Governments of the three Great Powers.

The Death Camps

The reaction of the British and American publics to visual presentation of the butchery and torture in Buchenwald, Belsen and other German concentration camps is a welcome and healthy sign that, in a world which has supped full of horrors, civilised people have retained the capacity to be stirred by pity, revulsion and just wrath. But *sæva indignatio* is in itself an unconstructive and unstable emotion. Before we give rein to the desire (however intelligible it may be) to "take it out" of the German people in retri-

bution, let us pause and reflect that these atrocities were the product, not of the "national" war between Germany and the Allies, but of the ideological civil war in which Spain, as well as Germany, Vichy France no less than Italy, suffered from the ferocities and vileness begotten by Fascism. Hardships inflicted on prisoners of war by inadequate rations and forced marches (now mercifully ended by agreement) must not be confused with the deliberate extermination by the Nazis of "political" enemies. Victims of a sadism which has rightly revolted humanity, these "enemies" included German Socialists and Communists as well as the millions of abominably massacred Jews, Poles and Russians. Whatever be their degree of responsibility, the aftermath of defeat (to say nothing of Allied bombing) will bring inevitably harsh punishment on the whole German nation. But the concentration camps, the bestial apparatus of Nazi terror, existed long before the war, in days when the British ruling class—in Parliament and the F.B.I. alike—refused to recognise in Fascism an enemy with which there could be no accommodation.

Industrial Plan for India

While Indians are awaiting with diminishing hopes the political fruits of Lord Wavell's visit to London, New Delhi has published an outline of its industrial plan for India. Its outstanding feature is that it enumerates some twenty industries, including coal, steel, chemicals, shipbuilding, motors, aircraft, machinery and electric power, which are in future to be controlled from the Centre instead of the Provinces. It is contemplated that this control over location and development shall extend to the States. This is as it should be, but it cuts across the prevailing tendency of moderate political thought, which inclines to weaken the Centre and cut down the subjects allotted to it in order to placate the Muslim minority, which dreads Hindu ascendancy at the Federal Centre. Another startling new departure is that the plan contemplates a large measure of nationalisation among this score of industries. It may seem puzzling that the Indian Government should smile on socialisation, while Mr. Churchill nails the flag of free enterprise to the masthead. The explanation is to be sought in the communal controversy. Muslims, it is suggested, will be less hostile to industrialisation if it is taken out of the hands of Hindu and Parsi firms. In any State concern it will be provided that Muslims and Hindus shall be employed in fixed proportions. Such a plan might seriously impair the efficiency of the new services. It is also a proper question to ask whether New Delhi conceives of nationalisation on purely bureaucratic lines. In this connection the second part of "Bombay" Plan has now been published as a *Penguin* (*A Plan of Economic Development for India*). It also insists on centralisation, and, though the Tatas are its chief inspirers, it offers a compromise between capitalism and gradualist Socialism.

Rent Control

The long-awaited Ridley Report on rent control calls for immediate legislation. The matters with which it deals are already the theme of numerous lively disputes; and as soon as the war in Europe ends many thousands of urgent rent questions are certain to arise. It would be much better to have at once a Bill embodying the main recommendations of the Report than to have to wait, perhaps until the end of the year, for a better Bill. We urge this, though we agree strongly with Alderman Key and Mr. Buchanan in respect of the reservations attached to their signatures. They urge, against the majority of the Committee, that rent control ought to apply both to new houses built after the war as well as to existing houses, and to houses built by local authorities, which are at present outside the scope of control. They also plead for the abolition of agricultural tied cottages, except for stockmen, and for restrictions on the right of pre-war owners of houses to obtain possession irrespective of the merits of the case. These are important disagreements; but they are outweighed in present importance by the matters on which the Committee have been able to make a unanimous Report. These include the consolidation of the existing confusion of rent laws into a single statute; the retention of rent control for at least ten years after the war; and the establishment through local authorities of a general register of rents for controlled houses.

The Tribunals

Hardly less important are the Committee's proposals for control of furnished lettings, and the making illegal of the offering as well as the taking of premiums for possession, including cases where the premium is paid, not to the landlord, but to a third party. On the other hand, the proposal to repeal the existing limitations on interest charges and on the calling-up of mortgages seems to be definitely undesirable under present conditions. In general, the Committee's recommendations will give a very wide field of discretion to the proposed Rent Tribunals. Much will depend on getting good men for them and on providing for a regular interchange of information about their decisions in different areas, even though there will be no question of any decision given in one place constituting a legal precedent for others. These Tribunals are not to be "specifically legal or professional bodies," but should be composed of "persons of experience in public affairs," and should be entitled to employ expert professional assistance. There would have to be about 200 separate Tribunals for England and Wales, and about 30 for Scotland, the areas being based in the main on existing county and borough areas, but with several Tribunals for each of the very big urban agglomerations. Though their establishment will take away a large body of cases from the existing courts, it seems unlikely that the weight of legal opinion will be against them. It is widely recognised that many rent cases can be better decided on grounds of commonsense fairness than on strictly legal principles; and the Tribunals already in being for certain purposes in Scotland have worked well.

The Budget

There was little in Sir John Anderson's speech to attract attention. He was able to announce a Double Taxation Treaty with the United States —regarded as a complement to the Income Tax Bill now before Parliament. There was a hint of a new Treasury "axe" before very long: "Treasury control must immediately assert its effective authority" over "free spending"; some small concessions in E.P.T.; a tribute to the success of P.A.Y.E.; and some discussion of long-term financial arrangements for industry and trade. Sir John was more precise on the cost of living. Though it has only risen slightly in the last year, he could not promise to peg it at its present level, but expected a rather considerable rise in the next twelve months, which he did not intend to offset by further subsidies. This is the most unsatisfying part of the Budget, and cannot be dismissed by producing percentage figures for wages and earnings which nominally offset the jump in prices. Other Government figures can be quoted to show the opposite. Nor is a further jump in prices to be viewed complacently. If it coincides with the release of some war savings and gratuities, it might help to promote the inflation that Sir John is so anxious to avoid when he is arguing against further wage advances.

The Plan for Glasgow

The City of Glasgow has now published a "fifty years' plan," prepared by the City Engineer. Like Sir Patrick Abercrombie's plan for London, it is based on treating the city as a "conurbation" made up of a number of smaller local communities, each with a distinct civic life of its own; and also resembles the London plan in being designed to fit in with a larger plan covering the Clydeside urban area as a whole. The changes envisaged include the replanning of the entire view-front in the centre of the city, where it is at present obstructed by obsolete wharves and buildings, the provision of ring roads, and the placing of some of the central road services underground. The scheme is ambitious and, as far as we are able to judge of it, soundly conceived—but what hope is there of any considerable part of it being carried into effect? None at all, unless the cost of acquiring land already built upon can be drastically reduced—as it clearly cannot be without public ownership of the land surface as a whole—or unless the present tangle of local government finances can be straightened out. Critics may plan on paper, but the practical results of planning depend on national decisions, which the present Government clearly has no intention of taking.

PARLIAMENT: Light, More Light

Wednesday.

THE most dramatic recent episodes were the Prime Minister's announcement that eight M.P.s were to fly to inspect Buchenwald Camp before the bodies of its dead inmates had completely decomposed, and the Speaker's re-illumination of the Big Ben lantern.

It is to the credit of a House of Commons whose average age is high that no fewer than 150 Members volunteered at once for the grim and arduous visit to Germany. The visit was, perhaps necessarily, a brief one; but there is every reason to expect that the selected Members—ranging from Southby and Wickham on the Right to Silverman and Driberg on the Left—will produce an honest and competent report of what they saw. Members are now urging strongly that other delegations and commissions—legal, medical, and from neutral countries—more elaborately equipped with fact-finding apparatus should visit all the main Nazi camps in time to record the myriad tragic and evidential case-histories before the victims are dispersed throughout Europe.

Mr. Speaker seems to have a livelier sense of prose style (and of the value to Parliament of dignified publicity) than any of his predecessors. On Budget Day the debate usually finishes early; but this was the day on which, at 9.30 p.m., the light could first be switched on. There was a great running to and fro of Whips to coax Members into keeping the debate going; and even the officially unpopular volubles found their interventions, for once, smiled on. To the cynics, this was all rather puerile; but the switch-pressing ceremony, when it came, was unusual and moving.

The Budget speech, despite its former prestige, is increasingly regarded as one of those Ministerial speeches which may well be taken as heard, since even if you disagree with it, there is nothing much that can be done about it, and the newspapers print full summaries. This one, delivered in the Chancellor's best plum-jelly voice, and described by Arthur Greenwood as "very masterly," was at once inflexible and provisional, since, as Anderson said, it "may possibly have to be superseded before the year is out." A reference to savings drives was the cue for Stokes to shout that they were "all humbug"; otherwise the speech meandered equably for an hour and three quarters.

At question-time the Prime Minister resisted with a firm "No, sir," an unpractical suggestion by a usually sensible Labour Member, Martin—that leading citizens of *all* the occupied towns of Germany should be forced to visit the Nazi camps and lecture to their fellow-citizens on what they saw there. Price raised a grave case—the sentencing to death of an anti-Nazi German prisoner-of-war in this country by Nazis. Grigg admitted that there had been one such actual murder, but assured the House that he had been "pressing on very earnestly" towards complete segregation. He also circulated in *Hansard* an interesting tabular comparison between German P.o.W. and British civilian rations.

PONTIFEX MINOR

THE LABOUR PROGRAMME

THE Labour Party has produced its programme for the coming General Election. We now know precisely, on the main questions, what a Labour Government will and will not attempt in the first post-war Parliament if the electors return it to power. The programme is, indeed, for such a document, remarkably clear and precise about the main domestic issues. It is much less so about international affairs, and in particular about the treatment of Germany; but that, maybe, is unavoidable at the present stage. For the moment we must rest content with a very satisfactory exposition of the short-term Labour policy on the home front.

The Labour Party proposes, not as Mr. Churchill recently tried to make out, a wholesale nationalisation of industries, but, on the contrary, a carefully limited programme of early nationalisation. The industries which are to be brought under public ownership are coal, steel, gas and electricity, and the main branches of inland transport. Land, apparently, is to be brought under effective public control *à la* Uthwatt, but not nationalised outright. The Bank of England is to come under public ownership, but the other banks are only to be controlled so as to ensure their conformity to the Government's economic plans. Other large industries, which occupy a key position in the national economy, are to be made subject to controls designed to bring their policies into line with the requirements of full employment; and there are to be special measures for the control of prices and the restraint of restrictive monopoly practices. Bulk purchase, as operated by the Ministry of Food during the war, is to be retained; and the County Agricultural Committees are to remain for the development of agricultural efficiency and the promotion of a progressive policy of food production. The smaller industries are to be allowed in the main to go their own way: the Labour Party explicitly repudiates any desire to maintain "control for control's sake."

The statement puts "full employment" right in the forefront. It stresses the need for maintaining consumption by means of good standard wages and comprehensive social security services. It faces the implication that "full employment" involves directed investment and control over the location of industry; and it goes back to the familiar proposal that a public Investment Board shall become the main agent of this direction. It promises extensive public works, that is, a large public sector in the field of investment; and for the furtherance of one key point of public investment policy it proposes a Ministry of Housing and Planning, under which would be unified the functions at present disastrously divided between several different departments. It gives a high priority to the full implementation of last year's Education Act, including the raising of the school age to sixteen as soon as possible; and, in its discussion of the health problem, it comes out strong on the side of a comprehensive service, including health centres. The proposed tax policy includes lower taxation of the smaller incomes, and it is emphasised that the social programme can be well afforded by the nation—but only if a policy of "full employment" is in fact energetically pursued.

There is in all this little or nothing that is new. Indeed, the Executive will probably be criticised at the Whitsun Conference for its failure to bring its "gradualism" into line with the more radical Socialist resolutions passed, against its wishes, at the last Party Conference. It has produced not a new programme, but a selection from its earlier programmes, showing simply what it would set out to do first. A question that naturally comes at once to mind is: How far does this Labour programme differ from the "advanced Liberal" programme which Sir William Beveridge, as Liberal campaign leader, has begun energetically to preach as an alternative to both Labour and Conservative policies? The answer is that it differs mainly in placing much greater emphasis on public ownership—a question which Sir William is obviously out to soft-pedal all he can. It does not differ about "full employment," or the control of monopoly, or social security and health services, or, as far as we can judge, housing. How wide the difference on public ownership really is who shall say? Could the Liberals in fact carry through their full employment policy without nearly as much nationalisation as the Labour Party suggests? And, if they could not, would they, when it came to the point, accept the nationalisation or abandon full employment? Directly, the test is not likely to be made; for, despite Sir William's brave words, nobody really regards the Liberals as a possible government. Indirectly, the question might arise very soon if Liberals were to hold the balance between the two main parties after the election.

As for the Tories, they have contributed to the week's political debate a ludicrous rant by Mr. Assheton, according to whom we ought to reject Socialism outright because Karl Marx was a German, and denounce as "slavery" any system in which a man cannot change his employer whenever he feels so disposed. Does Mr. Assheton really mean that postmen and established Civil Servants of all grades are slaves, whereas miners and textile workers enjoy perfect freedom? No, of course not: he does not mean anything. He is merely making bellicose Tory noises on behalf of the rights of property. The Tories need no election programme: their party line is to say "Mr. Churchill" as often as possible, and for the rest to abuse the other side. It is a nice, easy line; and it may work. But no one really knows whether it will work or not, or whether the studied moderation of the Labour programme will act as a sufficient counterpoise to the weakness of the party's electoral strategy. An important factor may be the early release of Mr. Bevin from office; for what he has said in his two recent speeches plainly make him out as a personality on the Labour side who might be an election-winner if his hands were free.

POSTSCRIPT ON GREECE

IN competition with the last act of the German tragedy and the meeting of mankind in San Francisco it is not easy to expect attention for the subdued, slow-moving drama in Greece. No crisis has occurred there since General Plastiras fell and Admiral Voulgaris took his place with a Cabinet of professors, bankers and officers, half of them Royalists. The chief event in contemporary Greek history is the event that does not happen. Four months ago Mr. Eden undertook in a statement to the Commons that a mixed Government would be formed with a programme of reconciliation, in which representatives of E.A.M. should sit. Two Ministries have since been formed, but the essential part of the promise has been forgotten. There were only two possible courses when the deplorable and unnecessary fighting in Athens came to an end. One was to build up again the shattered unity of this Allied nation, which could be done only if some of the representative leaders of E.A.M., who had behind them a gallant record of patriotic service, were brought back into full collaboration with other groups. The other course was to treat E.A.M. as beaten rebels, excluded from any active influence in the country whose freedom they did so much to recover. The second course was followed, with the inevitable consequence that no process of reconciliation can begin.

In one particular, faith has been kept with E.A.M.; there have been in the courts no legal reprisals against the leaders. But in every other possible way, the dominant forces of the Right, which owe their power to British arms, have used it to wreak their revenge on their political opponents. The State Church and the State University led the way. The two bishops who joined E.A.M. were deposed, while Professor Svolos and a colleague were dismissed from their chairs. These men were too conspicuous to be victimised in silence, but our newspapers do not mention the village priests and the day-school teachers who suffered with them. The banks followed by carrying out a purge of their staffs, but the largest number of sufferers were to be found (as *The Times* has reminded us) among the workers of the public services of Athens. From bishops and professors to tram conductors and electricians, no known adherent of E.A.M. was spared.

We cannot dismiss all this as a vagary of Greek politics for which we have no responsibility. It has happened only because we have allowed the propertied Right, most of it Monarchist, to abuse in this way the victory we won for it. Our reputation is directly at stake because we justified our armed intervention on the score that an impartial mediator was required to enable the Greeks to make a free choice by plebiscite between the Monarchy and the Republic. After this spate of economic terrorism it is nonsense to pretend that a free vote can be taken. The effect of a wholesale purge is not merely to penalise known Republicans: it is a warning to the average man to take good care lest he expose himself to a fate that may mean starvation for his children and himself.

It happens that there was in Greece during the critical years a peculiarly well-qualified observer, who has now published his impressions. Professor Persson, who has always held aloof from Party politics, fills the chair of Archæology and Ancient History at Uppsala, and is known throughout the learned world for his excavations in Greece. With a background of long familiarity with that country he worked there from March, 1943, to January, 1945, as an official of the Red Cross. His record of what he saw, chiefly in the Peloponnese, recently appeared in three signed articles in the Swedish Liberal *Dagens Nyeter*, and made a deep impression on Scandinavian readers. He begins with an account of the coming together of many underground parties, workers and civil servants' organisations and youth movements to form E.A.M. He tells us that it grew till it included in some regions the majority of the population. In parts of the Peloponnese 80 to 90 per cent. of the people were members or sympathisers. His outline of its political programme makes it clear that it had no revolutionary purpose: what it stressed was the need for a regular civil service, measures against malaria, better hospitals, equal civil rights for women and other social reforms. In its early days it organised general strikes which compelled the Germans to abandon their attempt to mobilise certain age groups for military service. It organised relief for the victims of German severities. When the Italians disbanded the rural police and the courts ceased to function, it became an invisible government, which restored respect for property and order.

The growth of E.L.A.S. came later—from a few groups spontaneously formed for sabotage into a ragged but disciplined army of nearly 100,000 men. The Germans "talked with obvious fear" of this secret organisation, and it was they who spread the idea that all its members were Communists. From the British it got some weapons by air, but in such inadequate quantities as to create "a certain bitterness." The most savage phase of the struggle came in the winter of 1943-4 when the Nazis threatened to kill 50 Greeks for every slain German. After an ambush, more than 100 of the leading men of Sparta were executed by way of reprisal. The German patrols were led by masked Greeks, members of E.D.E.S., which at that time "worked" with the Germans, because it had a quarrel with E.A.M. In one little town alone, Kalavrita, more than

1,000 men were shot—its entire male population between 15 and 60 years of age. E.D.E.S. all this time acted as informers, until they suddenly left the Peloponnese for Central Greece. By May, 1944, E.A.M. was so active and so strong that the Germans were forced to declare the whole Peloponnese "a theatre of war" and to reinforce themselves by using the Security Battalions. Between them, in the Peloponnese alone, the Germans and these quislings executed 6,975 persons and burned 10,882 houses. This use of Greek traitors inevitably increased the bitterness of the struggle, and in its turn E.A.M. began to burn houses and execute its enemies. During this summer it gained control of the whole of the Peloponnese, excepting its towns. These also it won in September, 1944, when the Germans withdrew. It besieged the Security Battalions in them, well armed though they were with artillery under professional officers, and took them by storm, after much bloodshed. The quislings, while they held these towns, kept up a reign of terror against their patriotic inhabitants. After victory, E.A.M. executed some of these traitors.

When Professor Persson comes to describe the break between E.A.M. and the British, he makes it clear that there was from the first some "coldness" in their relations; but the real trouble was due solely to the fact that E.L.A.S., "the heroes and patriots of yesterday, the saviours of their country, were not to be allowed to carry arms in Athens," whereas the Mountain Brigade, a picked Royalist formation, went about armed, and was to form the kernel of the new army. After telling the story of the fatal demonstration in Constitution Square, he asks whether fighting was thereafter inevitable. His answer is emphatically that it could have been avoided if General Scobie had shown "greater flexibility and a better understanding of the Greek temperament." Instead, he ordered E.A.M., very harshly, to clear out of Attica before negotiations could start, and "this came to be regarded as an open challenge." E.A.M., he believes, was not anti-British, but it was jealous for Greek independence. "We won't sell our independence for canned food" was one motto it painted on the walls. Another was: "We want neither Germans, Russians nor English as masters of our country."

Professor Persson's final conclusion is disturbing. He rates the military performance of E.L.A.S. very much more highly than Mr. Churchill did. Unaided, they liberated the whole of the Peloponnese—the region he knew personally. Again, when the Allies attacked Sicily and Southern Italy, the Germans needed all the troops they had for their defence. "But E.L.A.S. started a campaign of sabotage, which not only made any transfer of German troops from Greece impossible, but actually increased the number of German troops tied up in this region." To him and other eye-witnesses it seemed that "the price the Greeks had to pay for blown-up bridges was disproportionately high." After reminding his readers that Greek resistance against the Italians delayed the attack on Russia, he sums up with the verdict "that Greece has been of more use to England than England to Greece during this war."

This opinion by an exceptionally well-placed neutral observer may be as near as we can get to-day to the judgment of history. The final verdict will depend on our making a genuine effort to achieve the reconciliation we promised. It will not come while we tolerate a White Terror as a preparation for the coming plebiscite.

FRENCH BREAD AND CIRCUSES

OUTSIDE the *Salle de la Mutualité* stood a dozen policemen, waiting for trouble. They didn't get it. The fifteen hundred demonstrators at the hunger-protest meeting called by the *Syndicat des Ouvriers Boulangers*, the Bakers' Trade Union, were clay-faced and orderly. Housewives with empty shopping baskets, children, unemployed men and stewards wearing red brassards, sat in the gloomy hall and took in the speeches as though the words were bread. A single Paris paper noticed the event—in three lines. A few days later, on Easter Monday, General de Gaulle held his big military parade and presented the *Croix de la Libération* to Paris. The Ministry of Information gave the press a special paper allocation; the dailies doubled their size; the energetic French censor allowed hundreds of thousands of optimistic words about France's recovery to reach the public, and the voices shouting "*Gloire!*" smothered the voices demanding bread.

But the immediate question of bread—and underlying it, France's great problem of economic reform and the abolition of privilege—is more urgent than the question of the Army's revival. De Gaulle's Government is tolerated; it isn't loved. At the present moment it draws its support from the circumstance that neither the Right nor the Left feels itself strong enough to take power alone, and is prepared to suffer a colourless Government, enjoying the confidence of the Allies, which will be a safeguard for each against the other. But now the momentum of the Vichy administration has exhausted itself, together with its material reserves; the new administration must set the machine of government and supply in motion again. Are de Gaulle's men able to govern? How are they coping with their job?

Consider the case of M. Ramadier, the Food Minister. When M. Cabalier, a speaker at the hunger-protest meeting, mentioned his name, there were shouts of "*Ramadier à la porte! Ramadier au poteau!*"—"Out with Ramadier! Hang Ramadier!" Ramadier is unpopular. In their gentler moods the Parisians call him M. Ramadan—Ramadan being a protracted Moslem fast. Sometimes, when they talk of punishment for Germany, they advocate sending Ramadier there as Food Minister. A speaker alleges, "There's sabotage in the Food Ministry . . . the stuff goes to the Black Market." "The only thing that's cheaper since the country's been liberated," says another, "is forged ration cards."

A Trade Union official expresses some of the bitter disappointment of the French workers that the great economic revolution, implicit in the programme of the Resistance, has not taken place. He complains that the men of the Trusts still exercise power, among them the de Wendels of the *Comité des Forges*, who have begun an action against a Resistance journal for slander. The audience boos. They are saying what Mendès-France, Minister of National Economy, was soon to say in a more emphatic form. His resignation was a protest against the failure of the hoped-for revolution which was implicit in the Committee of Liberation's programme. Like millions of Frenchmen, he thought that liberation would coincide with the transfer of power from Big Business and the Two Hundred Families to the producers. Instead, Mendès-France had to complain that the Bank of France, makers and unmakers of governments before 1940, had obstructed him in his work of economic reform.

Within de Gaulle's Government the Right Wing, led by M. René Pleven, former Minister of Colonies, then Minister of Finance and now Minister of Finance and National Economy, has triumphed. Pleven is a Conservative with a great admiration for Britain, a safe man opposed to Mendès-France's far-reaching plans for price control, confiscation of illicit profits, nationalisation and the resolute excision of the Black Market. Pleven's new taxes to limit spending and check inflation have neither frightened the rich nor reassured the poor. On the other hand, his caution has rallied to the Government most of the *néo-attentistes*. An important cleavage of interest in France is fostering among industrial workers, employees and small *rentiers* and pensioners, a mood of resentment or despair; among the industrialists, higher civil servants, peasants, shopkeepers and distributors, a mood of anti-social cynicism. The decline in the purchasing power of the franc has meant a deterioration in the condition of those with fixed incomes and wages.

"They want to provoke the workers of Paris," said a speaker at the *Salle de la Mutualité*. The workers of Paris are holding themselves in check. They are incensed by the display of those who have done well out of the war—a display which manifests itself both in material things and in the exercise of privilege. The cars that park outside the Club Français, lately Ciro's, anger the Parisian who has heard that one of the causes of food shortage is lack of transport. There are privileged classes in France to-day: the financiers and industrialists who have their money in inflation-defying factories, machines, real estate, Renoirs and Corots; the peasants who live well on their basic produce and have their land; the distributors—dairymen and butchers, for example—who trade in kind and put their money into postage stamps; the high civil servants, including many newly arrived administrators from Algiers and London, who have reached authority and privilege the quick way.

What, then, has happened to France's *rénovation*? The Parties are struggling to re-emerge. But de Gaulle's speech on Easter Monday was discouraging. "Let the Party bidding be silent together with private interests! Let us work and flatten those who stand in our way!" He has already snubbed the Consultative Assembly by complaining of its lack of men. Against whom were his remarks directed? In a general sense against the Parties of the Left, though not as a challenge to the Communists. They form the only organised Party whom de Gaulle respects. Without their support his Government would shake. The Communists know it, and prop him up deliberately. When, at the hunger-protest meeting, a baker mentioned the forthcoming military demonstration, there was mild derision. The people wanted their circuses, but they wanted bread as well. The Communists gave the demonstration their unqualified support, because Soviet foreign policy requires a strong French Army, even if de Gaulle's projected Army of two million means that so many the more are kept from the factories and fields. The Communist Party is not, for the time being, the party of revolution; it is the party of the candid friend, keeping de Gaulle on the right lines to suit Soviet policy, which, as the Communists argue, is ultimately the best policy for the world's working class.

Nor has the Resistance any reality as a co-ordinated political force. At its strongest, it was a chain of individuals, each of whom knew only a handful of links in the chain. The Resistance has demobilised itself, and the Resistants have returned to their affiliations of Party or private interest.

"The trouble is that nobody in France says what's at the back of his mind," said M. Jean Schlumberger in *Figaro* the other day. What does de Gaulle intend? Does he want to prolong and strengthen his personal government? Is he a militarist? Will he be a sedative or an irritant to post-war Europe? Those questions are being asked both inside and outside France. It is certain that de Gaulle sees himself as one of the dynamic leaders whom, he says in *Vers l'Armée de Métier*, France requires. His contempt for the politicians is the traditional contempt of the professional soldier; and he makes less and less attempt to conceal it. He sees himself as the leader above the crowd, but he doesn't neglect to make himself heard by the most up-to-date instruments of modern publicity. When de Gaulle speaks, loud-speakers on trees and lamp-posts carry his words to every part of Paris. His programme is a simple one: the coal of the Saar and the industries of the Rhineland; France to make herself felt in Europe by having the biggest and, ultimately, the most modern army in the West. The internal problems of France—supplies, food, transport? Leave that to the com-

hissariat. Put civilians like René Mayer or Pleven on the job. They'll manage. Morale at home? France will regain her soul when she sees the *tricolore* flapping over the Place de la Concorde and hears the tramp of the revived regiments as they march, with bands playing, down the flower-strewn Boulevard des Capucines.

There are many millions of Frenchmen who regard such solutions of France's difficulties as glib and dangerous. Among them Louis Saillant, who has announced as one of the slogans for the monster demonstrations of July 14th, "For democracy and the Republic." The C.G.T. has taken new strength from its tough fight during the Occupation. More than ever it represents democratic feeling in France. It will not easily agree to an undue prolongation of de Gaulle's authority without popular ratification, or to the continued absence of parliamentary government. De Gaulle didn't mention the Communards when he eulogised the City of Paris; his failure to do so didn't go unobserved. The tradition of militancy which he would like to foster has a different origin from the revolutionary militancy of the French workers.

"Each generation has its task. Ours has found in its cradle a heritage difficult to support; the recreation of our armies, the reconstitution of our war material, the uplifting of our country's soul from the depressions of its days of misfortune, the revival of faith in the future of France."

Memorable words, spoken by General Boulanger, the idol of Paris, whose war-cry was "Alsace-Lorraine," and who at one time aspired to become Dictator of France. These fine words have a modern ring; but the finest phrases of Generals when they ascend the rostrum are mistrusted by Republicans. Boulanger gave the French people all the circuses they wanted, and if it hadn't been for his vanity he might have achieved his ambitions. De Gaulle is a political general with a prestige that Boulanger never had—the prestige of success. But the success which he achieved by the happy coincidence of his return to France and the victories of Allied armies, aided by the Resistance, will not preserve his popularity, unless it is reinforced by social and economic achievement at home.

MAURICE EDELMAN

A LONDON DIARY

THE accounts of the "Horror Camps" in Belsen, in Buchenwald, in Celle, and elsewhere, evoke in me a bewildering mixture of thought and feeling. Trying to sort out the threads in the tangle first and foremost I come inevitably upon the emotion of horror. These things that have been done are as horrible as any things that human beings have ever done to one another—and that is saying a lot. They are *more* horrible in that they have been done on a larger scale. I remember a friend who had had some personal experience of horrors—"atrocities," we called them then—in the last war, making two points: (1) "These things," he said, "are never so bad as they are reported to be; (2) even if they were much less bad than reported, as indeed they are, their horror, nevertheless, exceeds anything that most of us can conceive." Very likely! This time, however, they seem to be every bit as bad as they are made out to be.

I find next impatience; impatience with people who don't believe, don't *even now* believe and say that this is merely a newspaper stunt, or is government propaganda. (Very often these are the same people as wish to boil all Germans in oil or skin them alive.) Why don't they believe? The refusal is partly a natural defensive mechanism of the mind against the admission of the intolerable; there are certain things, one is tempted to think, whose perpetration is easier to human beings than the admission that they are perpetrated. Partly, however, it is due to the "once bitten, twice shy" attitude of the victims of years of propaganda, who are no longer prepared to give a ready assent to anything. There is a nemesis that waits on those who perpetually twist truth to serve their ends, and the publicity power of the popular press has been for so long perverted to serve the purposes or propagate the dogmas of their owners, that, when the simple truth is for once told, everybody is wary. The popular press, in fact, has called "wolf, wolf," too often.

* * *

But I suspect that propaganda is even now not wholly absent. Why are these disclosures suddenly given such terrible and persistent prominence? Partly, no doubt, for creditable and understandable reasons; the camps have just been opened up, the feeling of horror is still fresh in people's minds and newspaper proprietors and editors, being personally humane men, are as shocked as the rest of us. The motive, however, is, I suspect, in part to whip up anger against the Germans and sharpen the demand for revenge—anger against all Germans, revenge upon all Germans, for are they not all tarred with the same brush? At any rate, whether they are or not, it is both easier and emotionally more satisfying to think so, though why, if they are, Hitler should have found it necessary to throw no less than two million of his fellow countrymen into concentration camps *before the war began*, and maintain 900,000 secret police at the height of his success during it, is not clear. I wonder, incidentally, how many of those who criticise the German people for ignorance or docility or condemn them for passive complicity would have raised their voices against the government in this country had they known that death or torture were the penalties for criticism. "What could I have done?" the German pastor of a village near Belsen is reported to have said: "Had I preached against the regime or denounced the camps, the immediate result would have been that I, my wife and my children, would have been sent to one of them." It has needed, even in England, more courage to be a conscientious objector, to denounce night bombing, or to advocate a negotiated peace, than many of us can compass. And how many of the English who, by implication, are politically alert and self-conscious citizens, take the trouble to find out what is going on in English prisons?

* * *

But why, I repeat the question, the fuss *now?* Here one's feeling of impatience deepens into indignation. For six years prior to the war the facts relating to concentration camps were known in this country, but broadly speaking, publicity was given to them only in the organs of the Left. I remember the accounts carried by the *Manchester Guardian* of the Brown Terror, "Europe's Worst Terror," it was called, which succeeded the burning of the Reichstag in 1933, and how their daily perusal upset me to the point of compelling me to give up the *Manchester Guardian*, and to look at the Nazis and their doings through the comparatively rose-coloured spectacles of the more decorously spoken *News Chronicle*. I remember, too, a terrible article in this journal—there may have been two of them—on Dachau. But, broadly speaking, the papers of the Right knew nothing of these things. Was it because the victims were only German Jews, Liberals, Social Democrats, Communists and Pacifists, or was it because the policy of the Right was to cultivate good relations with the Nazis at all costs?

* * *

There is nothing surprising in the fact that people like myself should have known this thing for what it was ever since 1933. For many of us on the Left had friends who were among the first victims. I remember, for example, a letter which I received in the spring of 1933 from a pacifist friend in Germany. He had, it seemed, been beaten up in the early days of the Brown Terror, but had escaped and was then in the Bavarian Mountains. The object of the letter, which had been smuggled out of Germany, was to ask whether it would be possible to arrange for a series of articles—the *Manchester Guardian* and this journal were mentioned as possible recipients—describing what was going on in Hitler's Third Reich. The point of the letter was, however, for me, in the postscript which ran as follows: "I should so much like to see you and others of my friends in England again, but I am afraid I can never permit myself to do this, since I have only half my face left."

* * *

Amid the growing excitements of victory the new Regulations under the Butler Education Act came into force almost unnoticed. They mark what is, in effect, a revolution. But the revolution is less in the present than for the future, a future which may be a distant one. In the present the position is that 60,000 teachers are required to bring the number of teachers back to the 1939 level, and a further 60,000 to enable the School Leaving Age to be raised to fifteen. It is proposed to recruit some of these by a Training Scheme which will reduce the already inadequate period of training from two years to one. Meanwhile, many teachers are up in arms against any move to raise the School Leaving Age until the size of existing classes is reduced. Under the Regulations the number for each class is fixed—at 15 for the under fives, 40 for the under twelves, and 30 for children from twelve to the School Leaving Age, whenever that may be. In fact, classes are now being taught which are grossly in excess of these numbers. Many teachers are trying to cope with classes of 50, some with classes of over 60, while few teach less than 40. Teachers say very properly that it is impossible to give anything remotely resembling education to classes of this size, and that to promise to raise the School Leaving Age to fifteen, until they are reduced is mere political window dressing.

* * *

I have before me a communication from the Primary Teachers' Association for Scotland which has been sent to all Scottish M.P.s—Scotland has its separate Bill but it follows very similar lines—demanding that the size of classes in Primary Schools should be limited to a maximum of 30 and enumerating among the evil effects of mass teaching: (1) that crowding necessitates the imposition of a discipline which militates against self-expression and freedom of development in the child and friendly co-operation between child and teacher; (2) that it promotes juvenile delinquency at both ends of the intellectual scale; among the more intelligent children, because, held back to the pace of the average they find concentration and mental effort unnecessary and seek outlets in other directions; among the less intelligent because of their sense of hopeless discouragement; (3) that it effectively precludes character training which is only possible when the teacher can know and treat each child as an individual; (4) that it discourages badly needed recruits to the teaching profession who know that the conditions of mass teaching prevent good work and leads to a sense of frustration arising from the conviction that none of the ideals which men and women of good will entering the profession would normally wish to serve can be realised.

* * *

I can testify to this last effect from my own experiences. Viewing numbers of rather improbable looking students many of whom are teachers zealously taking their notes, I have asked them why they come to lectures on philosophy.

"Because we want a Degree."

"But why philosophy?"

"Because we are taking our Degree in psychology and a philosophy paper is an obligatory part of the examination."

"Why bother with a Degree at all? Aren't you secure in your profession?"

"Because we want to get out of our profession."

"But the country is crying out for teachers."

"Maybe, but we have had enough. There is no future in it."

C. E. M. JOAD

THE DERELICT FAMILY

THE authors of the evacuation study *Our Towns* lamented that in the past inadequate attention has been paid to the problem of the "submerged tenth"—that social phenomenon usually described as the "problem" or "derelict" family. This may to some extent have been due to a natural desire on the part of sociologists not to probe too deeply into the domestic affairs of our poorest citizens; but the prime cause was the blissful ignorance of the general public that there is a problem at all. Medical officers of health, sanitary inspectors, health visitors are only too well aware of the seriousness of the problem, but their reports rarely get beyond the committees of the local authorities to whom they are responsible.

The following extracts taken from official reports suggest that it is high time the full facts about our derelict families saw the light of day. The first is a Health Visitor's report, dated November 9th, 1944.

> This is a Corporation house, 3 bedrooms. Family, Mr. B.—allows his wife £3 a week; Mrs. B.; Doreen (10), Raymond (9). This family has . . . not been previously reported as an unsatisfactory household, owing to the fact that the children are exceptionally well nourished. They are warmly clothed, and we have had no trouble with vermin or sores. Mrs. B. is of somewhat poor mentality, and is a poor manager, but she does her best to look after the children. The chief damage to the house is 17 panes of glass broken, and the gate and surrounding posts, etc., have been removed, presumably for firewood. . . . The home is poor and shabby, and much of the furniture is broken, but I do not consider it is dirty. The three bedrooms were unoccupied. They were clean and tidy. The sleeping arrangements are most unsatisfactory . . . the parents and children sleep in one bed in the living room. The bedding is not in very good condition, and consists of two blankets and a cover . . . no sheets, and only one pillow case.

Another Health Visitor's report of the same date:

> Corporation house. Family consists of Mr. A.—H.M. Forces since May 1942; Mrs. A.; Pauline (11), Mollie (10), Maureen (7), Bernard (6), Michael (2). Inspected this house on November 7th. The front garden was strewn with milk bottles. The bedrooms were dirty and untidy. The bedding was dirty. The living room and scullery were in an indescribable state of muddle and filth (9.30 a.m.). Bernard had no shoes or stockings, and the only clothing Michael had was a dirty vest and woollen coat. Both children were infested with head vermin. On November 6th I saw Maureen and Mollie in school. They were dirty and ragged, and Maureen was in such a condition that she smelt. . . . Michael has had a severe carbuncle, and although Mrs. A. has been advised by the N.S.P.C.C. to take this child to the hospital or to see her own doctor, she did not trouble to do so.

Lastly, a report dated November 3rd:

> I to-day visited No. 3, E. Road, at 11 a.m. The tenant is Mrs. S.—husband away working in a shipyard. The children, James (8), Ian (6), David and Brian (2), were fairly clean and tidy. The house was in a very dirty condition, and the bedroom floors were covered in excreta to such an extent that it was impossible to walk without treading in it. The bed in which the children were said to sleep was soaked in urine and large maggots were crawling about. The small back bedroom was filled to the door with old flock and rubbish. In the front bedroom was a double bed with a broken straw mattress. In the pantry was a huge stale joint with vermin on it, also a large quantity of stale, mouldy bread. The woman could give no answer as to why she had allowed the home to get into such a state.

These reports, all coming in together in the short space of a week, could be paralleled by many others, good, bad and indifferent, spread over a period of years. They disclose a problem of quite a special nature.

Our first difficulty is lack of knowledge regarding the number of families involved. The records mentioned above have been drawn from the Public Health Department's files of a city of 100,000 inhabitants with an exceptionally good health record; the facts relating to about fifty families are now known, and there may be a number of others who have not yet earned the distinction of being classified as "unsatisfactory households." A valuable investigation by the Medical Officer of Health for Rotherham reported in a recent number of *Public Health* reaches the disquieting conclusion that probably 5 per cent. of that city's child population is being brought up in a "derelict" environment.

Secondly, it is not easy to ascertain precisely how these families get into such a state. Examination of a number of case-papers, nevertheless, discloses certain features that reappear fairly frequently. One is the presence of certified mental deficiency in the family—often the mother herself is mentally backward—and time and time again Health Visitors' reports state that Mrs. So-and-So is "of low mentality" or "dull and stupid" or "not bright." It is this type of family that procreates exceedingly, and when to the backwardness of the mother is added the presence of a number of children who are mentally deficient as well, it is not surprising that the domestic organisation breaks down.

All the homes that come under the classification of unsatisfactory households are of course very poor; but poverty, as such, is not the prime cause of the descent of a family into the derelict category. Many working-class families, even to-day, are desperately poor, but contrive somehow or other to keep up appearances.

Attempts have been made from time to time, where the large size of the family seems to be the real trouble, to induce the woman to hand over some of the children voluntarily to the care of the Corporation to be brought up in first-class surroundings elsewhere; but it is most unusual to find parents who will voluntarily part with their children, even in the filthiest environment. Even amongst the worst of problem households there is often a strong sense of family responsibility; and it is remarkable to find how rarely these children can be said to be neglected or ill-treated within the meaning of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933. They may be as black as niggers, they may be ragged and ill-shod; they may come of different fathers and may be accustomed to conditions of living from which any decent working-class couple would recoil in horror; but, as often as not, they are well-nourished—and happy.

The Law as it stands is of little use as a practical approach to the problem. Both the Housing Acts and the Public Health Acts contain provisions against overcrowding and against insanitary conditions in dwelling-houses. Even if proceedings are successful, the usual punishment is a fine, which increases the difficulty of making ends meet in a poverty-stricken household. Proceedings can also be taken under the Scabies Order for verminous conditions where such exist; but here again the resulting small fine is worse than useless. The Children Act of 1933 seems at first sight to provide a suitable remedy in the worst cases of neglect; but it is not easy to convince an unsympathetic Bench (invariably prejudiced against the Corporation officials) that the neglect is such as to require a sentence of imprisonment for one or both parents. It is true that a sentence of imprisonment involves the transfer of the children into the care of the local authority while the parents are serving their sentences; but as soon as they come out they demand their children back, and the Corporation has no power to retain them.

One new valuable approach to the problem has been made by the Corporation just mentioned. Some eighteen months ago the Council appointed a "Home Adviser," with the special task of visiting derelict and near-derelict households and endeavouring by advice and persuasion to rescue them. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining the right kind of adviser. She had to be something more than a charwoman, sent in by the Corporation to clear up the mess; but a middle-class "lady" would certainly have been refused admission to many households, and would have made little, if any, impression on their members. It is possible to say at this date that the Home Adviser has been a limited success. The worst homes have defied all attempts at reform from outside. In the "marginal" case, however, where the conditions have not be insupportable, where the family, though larg poverty-stricken and "dull," has not yet fall into the state described in my third report, th Home Adviser has made real progress. She h had a task that would have daunted all but th most strong-minded of women. She has had t scrub floors inches deep in indescribable filth, clean little children who have never known wash, much less a bath; then to teach du uncomprehending mothers the very rudiments mending and cooking and cleaning. There is no an increasing tendency for sanitary inspector and health visitors, through the Medical Office to call in the assistance of the Home Adviser any peculiarly difficult households.

Some day perhaps the public will recogni that an artificial limit must be placed on th continued reproduction of the unfit. Often a de elict family results from a bad start in domesti life rather than an inherent lack of mental qualitie Many young working men and girls marry whe a child is already on the way. There is hardl time to prepare a home before the baby is born Such a family never gets a fair start; and if second child follows all too soon after the first, never catches up. If the woman seems overburdene with domestic duties, a Home Help should b available to assist with the housework. If th number of children is about as much as the famil income will stand, the Health Visitor should hav the authority to give instruction in birth contro methods. And if the family is obviously beyon the mother's control, and it is clear beyond contra diction that the children will never have a re chance in life, then the local authority shoul have power to remove them, whatever the parent may say.

There is nothing wrong with the vast majorit of working-class folk who graduate from the slum to the new estates. By far the greater proportio of them respond to their improved environment But derelict families have an influence on a ne estate out of all proportion to their number Until they are tackled as a specific problem the will remain a source of danger to the respectabl families who are their neighbours, a source o worry to the public health authority and a standin menace to the well-being of the nation. It i time that the Ministry of Health made a move.

N. R. TILLETT

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this colum goes to E. Livermore.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of pape and give details of origin. Address to THI ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.2.

They entered it as Communist and anti-Na Germans, but humane, decent men nevertheless.—*Sunday Express.*

The Scottish Nationalist victory is not so sur prising as might have been expected.—*The Time*

Southend Town Council decided last night t pay £170 for a secondhand German piano for Westcliff school. Councillor Hyams said:

"I am wondering whether at this stage of th war the Education Committee is psychologicall right in installing anything connected wi Germany."—*Daily Mail.*

Shown in London all last week, the hats yo readers designed have caused quite a stir. Copie of the Tank and Flame-thrower hats are already o sale.—*Sunday Pictorial.*

The policy with regard to Dubbin Protectiv has been again reviewed by the Air Ministry, an it has been decided that in future the applicatio of Dubbin Protective to boots will only apply t units situated south of a line the Wash to Gloucester —R.A.F. Station Routine Orders.

UNARMED COMBAT

(A Poem from the Forces)

. . . *Et militavi non sine gloria.*

In due course of course you will all be issued with
Your proper issue ; but until to-morrow,
You can hardly be said to need it. And until that time,
We shall have unarmed combat. I shall teach you
The various holds and rolls and throws and breakfalls
Which you may sometimes meet.

And the various holds and rolls and throws and breakfalls
Do not depend on any sort of weapon,
But only on what I might coin a phrase and call
The ever-important question of human balance,
And the ever-important need to be in a strong
Position at the start.

There are many kinds of weakness about the body,
Where you would least expect, like the ball of the foot.
But the various holds and rolls and throws and breakfalls
Will always come in useful. And above all never be frightened
To tackle from behind : it may not be clean to do so,
But this is global war.

So give them all you have, and always give them
As good as you get ; it will always get you somewhere.
(You may not know it, but you can tie a Jerry
Up without rope. It is one of the things I shall teach you.)
Nothing will matter if only you are ready for him.
The readiness is all.

The readiness is all. How can I help but feel
I have been here before ? But somehow then,
I was the tied-up one. How to get out
Was always then my problem. And even if I had
A piece of rope I was always the sort of person
Who threw the rope aside.

And in my time I have given them all I had,
Which was never as good as I got, and it got me nowhere.
And the various holds and rolls and throws and breakfalls
Somehow or other I always seemed to put
In the wrong place. And as for war, my wars
Were global from the start.

Perhaps I was never in a strong position,
Or the ball of my foot got hurt, or I had some weakness
Where I had least expected. But I think I see your point.
While awaiting a proper issue, we must learn the lesson
Of the ever-important question of human balance.
It is courage that counts.

Things may be the same again ; and we must fight
Not in the hope of winning but rather of keeping
Something alive : so that when we meet our end,
It may be said that we tackled wherever we could,
That battle-fit we lived, and though defeated,
Not without glory fought.

HENRY REED

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THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

IF *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale* were not known to be by Shakespeare, and were therefore as unfamiliar upon the stage as *The Duchess of Malfi*, some critics would doubtless declare these plays to be of merely antiquarian interest. The plots and the characters, we should be told, are incredible to the modern public. So they are. And so is Buchenwald. In any case a good performance of any one of these three plays is an unforgettable experience.

It is sometimes grotesquely argued that because we know little of Shakespeare's life, he cannot have written his works. Of Webster's life we know far less ; we do not know when he was born, whether he was married, when he died. Yet *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, are, I suppose, the greatest non-Shakespearean tragedies in English, or equalled only by *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. If these plays had been by a Frenchman or a German, they would be regularly given in Paris or Berlin. But we English take little pride in our theatre. And so we can hardly now be too grateful to those who by producing *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Haymarket have begun to repair our unpatriotic negligence. It is such enterprises that justify the help given to the Haymarket Company by C.E.M.A.

Some playgoers may well be puzzled by the play, just because they are unused to the convention in which it is written. But only the most obtuse or hidebound can fail to find it exciting and beautiful. Webster's poetic imagination is prodigious—sometimes it seems indeed not inferior to Shakespeare's. Of course he had the benefit of Shakespeare's example ; but while he took freely from Shakespeare, he reveals (though only in these two tragedies) a strong, dark temperament of his own.

He is fascinated by everything sinister, exotic or otherwise bizarre. He likes images taken from diseases and savages and wild animals. He exploits chiaroscuro, anticipating the picturesque effects of Magnasco. How effective is the unleashing upon the Duchess of a pack of lunatics ; how poetic the scene where Echo answers Antonio among the ruins, how poetic and how topical :

. . . All things have their end :
Churches, and Cities (which have diseases like to men)
Must have like death that we have.

And he can command also a noble simplicity.

He was born some twenty-five years after Shakespeare, and his first plays are even gloomier than Shakespeare's last ones (which were previous by a few years). The intoxicating Italy of *Romeo and Juliet* has become a sinister haunt of sadistic tyrants and adulterous cardinals. Counter-Reformation Italy, in actual fact, while less blithe than Renaissance Italy, was far more moral. But for the English public the Rome of that austere reformer, Paul V, had the same fascination that it has recently found in the Chicago of Al Capone. Our playwrights were behind the times, and indeed *The Duchess of Malfi* is based on events that happened a century earlier.

What this public wanted was what the cinema public wants now—melodramatic surprises and explosions of violence. The difference is that it also wanted poetry. How quick-witted it must have been to grasp the rapid wit and extravagant tropes that we find alike in Jacobean plays and sermons ! We are more slow, but more concerned with motives. A Leontes or an Iago bewilders us ; and Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi* is even more enigmatic. Mr. Rylands, the eminent scholar responsible for the Haymarket production, has made him—rightly, I am sure—a neurotic, to whom we may assign an incestuous jealousy. (Mr. F. L. Lucas in his authoritative edition of Webster is doubtful of this explanation. But Ferdinand is frantic at the news, not of his sister's marriage, which might affect his financial prospects, but of her incontinence.) It is very spirited of Mr. Gielgud to undertake so hideously difficult a part. I do not think he altogether succeeds, any more than a tenor would succeed as Boris Godunov. Which of our actors could maintain the part ? It requires a Kean—and a histrionic training that has long disappeared. If I say that Bosola is incomparably easier—a mixture of Iago and Thersites, villainy and misanthropy oddly shot with pity—I do not detract from Mr. Cecil Trouncer's merits. I cannot imagine the part better played, and it is strange that he does not take the final curtain with Miss Ashcroft and Mr. Gielgud.

Miss Ashcroft's Duchess seems to me the richest thing she has done. A touch more majesty, specially in the opening scene, perhaps ? But how lovely, how fresh, how pathetic, how direct ! Even incorrigibly prosaic persons who, like Mr. Shaw, consider Webster "a Tussaud laureate," must go to the Haymarket to see the prison-scene between the Duchess and the "bell-man." Mr. Leslie Banks does not make much of the difficult part of Antonio ; and Mr. Leon Quartermaine is deeply disappointing and anæmic as the Cardinal, which is a far more rewarding role. This admirable actor hardly approaches the sinister veiled violence that is needed. Miss Marian Spencer, Mr. Miles Malleson and Mr. Max Adrian made the most of the secondary characters. The clear speaking of the whole cast—never an accent falling on the wrong word—is alone enough to set the production apart. The language is often intricate, and special congratulations must go to producer and actors for making it so intelligible.

Mr. Roger Furse's sets are apt and tenebrously romantic. (It is a pity that the same backcloth of an arcade has to do for Amalfi and for Rome.) The costumes are individually handsome, but not properly related to one another in colour—would that our designers would study the example set in this respect by Picasso and Derain ! I consider this the most rewarding revival since the Old Vic *Witch of Edmonton*. Some may consider it beyond the stomach of audiences debilitated by nursery diet from the hands of Mesdames Dodie Smith and McCracken. But a playgoer who misses it deprives himself of the chance to discover that he is capable of rising to an exciting imaginative occasion.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

RADIO NOTES

"WHAT'S the point of . . .?" Before the sneering tones have got any further, we know who is speaking. This is the voice of Stupidity, of Philistinism, of the Mass-Production tout, and of the S.S. man. All honour, then, to the Talks Department which, conscious of that hand reaching out for its revolver, has started a twenty-minute series each Monday in defence of pure culture. For that is what these talks amount to. Speaking about Astronomy, Dr. E. M. Lindsay might have dwelt on its practical uses (there are some, after all) ; instead he preferred to stand on what is really firmer ground. Astronomy, he said, is worth cultivating for its own sake—for the sake, that is to say, of the imaginative stimulus this particular kind of knowledge gives to our efforts to understand our position in the universe. To study a subject as a direct means to making a living, automatically interrupts appreciation of its essential qualities, and, as I suggested a few weeks ago, the inculcation and development of a sense of quality should be one of the first objects of education and is more urgently needed at present than at any period since the heyday of the Roman Empire. In Germany the Nazis have invented the mass-production of Death—death in series—death without features, without individuality, without personal meaning. This may be the end of the road (it is difficult to see what could lie beyond it), but at the beginning of it lie more innocent-looking things : background-listening, square teapots, artificial insemination, jitterbugging, perpetual crooning—and the voice which says, "What's the point of . . .?" Discussing Painting in the same series, Clive Bell had perhaps an easier job than Dr. Lindsay ; he certainly made some very good points and in a most persuasive manner. That the value of a picture does not depend on its subject but on the management of form and colour—this, most people seriously interested in art would be prepared to grant. But, though it seemed to me plain from his talk that Mr. Bell has mitigated the extreme rigidity of the view for which he became famous, twenty-five years ago, I take leave to doubt whether he really accords sufficient importance to the artist's own attitude to his subject. With all the respect due from one who is not an expert in this sphere, I would suggest that the point of pictures is fundamentally the same as the point of all art—*i.e.*, to make us see

things *in their essences*—to deduct the temporal and the irrelevant—and by so doing to lay bare the connections between all things in a coherent exposition of the world. If this were not so, a first-class portrait would affect us in precisely the same manner as a first-class still life; and surely it doesn't. . . . But that does not affect the chief contention of Mr. Bell's talk, which was that pictures (like stars) must be looked at for their own sake, and not as objects of propaganda or mere illustration. And another thing: Look at pictures a lot, and you will get into the way of using your eyes. You will acquire the habit of looking at things for other than practical reasons.

Is acting a pleasure? Yvonne Arnaud thought it was, and as she is an extremely good broadcaster, I believed everything she said. One thing interested me particularly: Miss Arnaud is, of course, a pianist of no mean order, and when she said that music was more difficult than acting I connected this at once with another remark of hers—that acting comedy is more difficult to do convincingly than acting tragedy, because in the former the actual words carry less weight. This parallel is worth pondering.

Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell are with us again in a new series of "How" programmes. I hope this raises your spirits as much as it raises mine. These two are in a fair way to becoming the *enfants terribles* of the B.B.C.: the first of their new programmes, *How to Blow Your Own Trumpet*, was as singeing as it was funny. They wisely wasted little time over the more obvious sorts of bragging and concentrated instead on the typically modern kind. I believe they are right in scarifying us all for our various indulgence in false modesty. "Yes, sometimes I think I *am* a happy person." To hear Miss Grenfell say that was instantly to wonder whether perhaps once, in some unguarded moment, one had oneself . . . But no: perish the thought! If we go on like that, shall we, I ask myself, have any small-talk left? We must all have squirmed in our chairs at some point in this scintillating piece of satire, but sheer fun predominated, and the delight of recognising some enemy voice. When next a busybody accosts us with: "How lucky you are to find time for reading *in the morning*!" how satisfying it will be to reflect: He (or she) is only trying to blow his own trumpet.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*April 29th.*—*The Trial of Lady Alice Lisle* (Historical Reconstruction. 3.45); "Revisiting France" (7.30); Mozart: String Quartet in G (10.0).

April 30th.—*One Fine Day* (Play, 9.30); Schubert: Symphony No. 2 (10.45).

May 1st.—"Shall I Become a Schoolmaster?" (Talk, 6.15); *The Padstow Hobby Hoss* (7.30).

May 2nd.—Symphony Concert (Mozart, Bliss, Dvorak. 7.15).

May 3rd.—*Malcusynski* (Piano recital, Chopin. 6.30); Thomas Hood (Poetry Reading, 10.5): Symphony Concert (G.F.P. 6.15).

May 4th.—"Should Scientists be Public Servants?" (Talk, 7.30); New Judgment: Elizabeth Bowen on Anthony Trollope (8.30).

May 5th.—Symphony Concert (Liszt, Lambert, Sibelius. 2.30). EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Hortobagy" and "Le Dernier Milliardaire," at the Academy

There are not many films that I wish to see straight through again, but I'd have sat on for *Hortobagy*. I have, in fact, paid it another visit since the press showing. The particular enjoyment to be derived from this film has hardly come my way since Flaherty's *Moana*, that enchanting picture of South Sea betrothal which, if revived, would please anthropologists and æsthetes alike. The subject of *Hortobagy* is a day on the great Hungarian plain. We see the sunrise, the herds of cattle, horses, pigs, beginning to stir; there is a fair in the neighbouring town for which they have to be rounded up; the midday meal; then the fair, with animals being branded, local dances, hand-propelled roundabouts; the trek home; evening with tremendously piled-up clouds; a thunderstorm; the sidelights of the sun as it disappears in the long grey folds of the night. There has been a story of a kind running through this day; two old lovers have come together again, two young ones agree to marry, a peasant boy loses his bicycle (strange intrusion on this primitive scene!) but decides to throw in his lot with the engineers. What fascinates, though, what holds the imagination for 75 minutes, is the rhythmic vision of a life that has persisted without change for a thousand years. It may be (I don't know if it is) to some extent an artificial creation of the director, George Hoellering; perhaps these dignified picturesque peasants (acting their own parts for the camera) don't exist, or if they do their way of life is gone and a fat profiteer in a café has bought up them and their flocks. That may be so; as I have said, I don't know. But the vision exists, like Lawrence's pictures of Mexico, with a sensuousness and delight of its own. No one using a camera has entered into the life of animals as Hoellering does here with his black horses. They keep reappearing; they canter across the plain; a mare gives birth to two foals which claw their way out of tacky envelopes; horses bend in lines over a drinking trough, stampede in stormy shadows; one stands cross-legged against the sky; we see them from all angles, as flowing violin shapes from above, classically graceful in profile; and the interleaved close-up of wild, gentle, bolting eyes in the half-darkness with which the film ends is one of the most haunting things I have seen. I have never before, I may say,—unlike Harpo Marx—had any but the coldest feeling for horses, but every movement of these animals is beautifully caught. *Hortobagy*, it seems, was filmed in 1936 or 1937, took a couple of years in the making, and has been banned here until now on account of the foaling—incidentally, one of the most beautiful sequences in the film. It doesn't date at all in style and is, in my opinion, superior to any documentary by Eisenstein; Dovshenko's *Earth*, perhaps, rather than the Flaherty film already mentioned, is nearest to it in impulse and execution. The musical score, including a number of Magyar songs and dances, has been brilliantly fitted to the movements on the screen.

In the same programme at the Academy, *Le Dernier Milliardaire* (1937) reappears. The revival of Clair is spreading; at the next meeting of the London Film Institute Society we are to see *Le Million*, one of his most inspired creations. *Le Dernier Milliardaire* isn't up to that, but I must say it wears admirably. I had almost forgotten this lightest of satires on royalty and dictatorship in a tinpot nationality; forgotten even the bartering citizen who pays for his drink with a live fowl, is given two chicks and an egg for change, and pushes back the egg as a tip. What seemed to us once an expression of poverty is now indescribable wealth! The fun is as brisk as ever, but the satire hardly touches. The good citizens of Casinario didn't have much to complain of; they ran out of currency, they had to do exercises in the square, and cabinet ministers for a while went on all fours; but that was all.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

GERMAN GUILT

SIR,—The publication of the pictures taken in Nazi slave camps has shocked the world in a way that is probably unprecedented, and those of us who have seen the still unpublished photographs know that the public has by no means seen the worst. What will be the effect of the publicity given to these pictures? The answer must depend upon the interpretation placed upon this incontrovertible evidence of Nazi bestiality. If we take the simple line that it proves the uniquely evil character of the German people we shall certainly live to regret that the pictures were not instantly suppressed. If, however, we are aroused to an awareness of the depths of which human nature is capable, then at least some good may come out of this mass of suffering.

Here is a severe test of the wisdom of the best of us. It is very noticeable that even the most enlightened people are bewildered by the extent of these horrors. They feel themselves hovering on the brink of some sort of Vansittartism and they are afraid of their own indecision. It is a dangerous moment, perhaps the most dangerous of the War.

We know, of course, that what has happened in Germany is that the worst elements have been allowed to get to the top, and that those elements have in turn made it their special business to place in positions of power over others, types who needed little encouragement to hatred and cruelty. Is that something that could only happen in Germany? Are there not elements in every country (including our own) which could not be trusted with similar power? Perhaps we may remind ourselves of a recent case of child-killing in seeking the answer to this vital question, and remember also that there has been much concern of late at the number of cases of cruelty to children that have found their way into our courts.

If the proportion is higher in Germany (and we do not know for certain that it is) should we not remember that for many years the Nazis have been deliberately twisting the minds of their youth during their most impressionable years with the deliberate intention of creating monsters?

But what of the rest of the German people? How could they stand by and allow these things to happen? There can be no doubt that those living in the neighbourhood of these camps must have had some idea of the things that went on inside them. Some did revolt and paid the same price as those they championed. As for the others, the majority, it is human nature to turn away as far as possible from the contemplation of the unpleasant, and to believe only what one wants to believe. How many of us are *truly* moved by the sufferings of others, that is, moved to do something about them? Homeless, bombed-out families in this country often faced indifference and even hostility from those upon whom they were billeted in safe areas. Human sympathy is something that can be quickly and spontaneously aroused by the actual spectacle of suffering (and the German people who have been forced to inspect the camps have demonstrated this), but give it a chance to avert its eyes and it will hasten to take advantage of the offer. If one comes to think about it, the indifference of the average decent person to the misery of his fellow human beings is appalling. And that without an ever-present Gestapo to discourage undue curiosity as to what is going on behind official walls.

Let us indeed sorrow when we look at these terrible pictures. Let us sorrow that the species called man, of which we are all a part whether we like it or not, can so behave in this twentieth century. But let us not again take refuge from unpleasant facts by glibly accepting the convenient theory that this is not human nature we are witnessing but merely German human nature. If we avoid the pitfall we shall have taken the first right step in any cure—a correct diagnosis. ERIC WARMAN

INDIAN TRIALS

SIR,—At a time when sincere efforts are being made both in India and Britain to reach an amicable and early settlement of the deadlock in India, the news of the Chimur and Ashti political trials, in which death sentences were passed on seven people for their alleged part in the disturbances of August 1942, has come to us as a shock. The whole of Bombay went on strike as the news came out, and the rest of India must be feeling profoundly unhappy, too. Indeed the tension rose so high that the Acting Viceroy, for the first time since 1942, agreed to meet the leaders of the "illegal" Congress party in the Central Assembly, and it is understood that Mr. Bulabhai Desai left no doubts in his mind as to the country's indignation at what may only be described as vindictive political trials. When, in 1942, the villages of Chimur and Ashti were razed to the ground by police vengeance, it is understandable, if not legally acceptable, that some villagers resisted the destruction of their homes and lives. We need not go into the legality of the sentences, which has, however, been questioned by no less an authority than the Bombay High Court, which has actually issued Writs of Habeas Corpus for the release of these men, and has requested the Central Provinces Government for a stay of execution of the sentences.

It is well recognised now that any settlement

India must wait upon the release of the political prisoners, and, in our view, political prisoners must include all those who were goaded to rash and injudicious action by the baffling events of August 1942.

Queen's College, Oxford.	BAL TILAK
Oriel College, Oxford.	S. K. MUKHERJEA
St. John's College, Oxford.	S. M. AHMAD
18 St. John Street, Oxford.	D. M. SEN

SELF-DETERMINATION

SIR,—Mr. Leonard Woolf is by now, I suppose, so accustomed to what he calls, "the framework of illusion and nonsense," which dominates our age that he sees it everywhere. I have no grounds for complaint in the terms in which he refers to my book on *National Self-Determination*. Indeed, they are generous. I only write this letter because I do not wish to leave your readers under the impression that I hold the views that Mr. Woolf attributes to me. One of us is evidently, as he says, wearing distorting spectacles, but when I find Mr. Woolf making me say precisely the opposite of what I wrote, I cannot but wonder whether they are perched on my nose or on his. In truth, he has made his review of my book into a very effective denunciation of opinions that might have been held, and a book that might have been written, about the time of the Boer War, but it is not my book.

According to Mr. Woolf, I assume "that the powerful state 'inevitably' will and therefore *must* use its power to determine its relations with weak states." Yet one of my main objects was to prove precisely the contrary. I devoted three chapters to showing that the British Commonwealth, in the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions, the United States in the policy it has followed during the last fifteen years towards the small States of Central America and the Caribbean, and the Soviet Union in the nationalities policy largely created by Stalin, have demonstrated that it is possible for powerful States to refrain from exercising their power to the detriment of smaller nations. Further, I argued that the events of the war have proved a triumphant vindication of these policies, and an overwhelming condemnation of the nationalistic imperialism of Germany, Italy and Japan.

Mr. Woolf objects to the view that the Great Powers have any right to protect their strategic interests. It is better called a responsibility than a right, but whatever it is called, I shall believe in the possibility of persuading them to sacrifice their strategic interests when the Soviet Union draws its frontier back to the outskirts of Leningrad, when the United States dismantles the chain of island bases that guard the North-American Continent and the Panama Canal, and when Great Britain presents Gibraltar to an international condominium and leaves Malta to find its natural geographic affiliations with Italy. My optimism, I must admit, did not extend as far as such proposals, but I attempted to show that the Great Powers could safeguard their strategic, like their other interests, better by co-operating with the smaller States than by bullying them. Is this what Mr. Woolf calls falling a victim to the illusion of power?

What is most extraordinary is that Mr. Woolf does not realise that he himself is a victim of the nationalistic illusions which he imagines he sees in my book. He still suffers from the anthropomorphic idea that it is possible to compare with profit the relations of states to those of individuals. He talks about the "rights" of States and protests against my alleged discrimination between the rights of small States and those of Great Powers. Once again, this is to attribute to me a point of view which I expressly rejected. My argument was that only individuals have rights, and that no collectivity, whether called State or nation, or by any other name, has any rights other than those of its individual members.

I hope I have made it quite clear that I disavow your reviewer's version of my arguments and conclusions. I am not ungrateful for his praise, but infinitely more important than any personal feelings are the international issues of to-day. It is not possible here to discuss Mr. Woolf's own views. I would only say in conclusion that while he regards them as a defence of the principles of international law and order, they seem to me a survival of a characteristic ideology of the period of international anarchy, which has now reached what we may still hope to be the climax before the turning of the tide. ALFRED COBBAN

University College, London.

[Mr. Leonard Woolf writes:—

"I am glad to find that Dr. Cobban, in one part of his letter, agrees with my view even if, in another part, he disagrees with it on the ground that it is 40 years old. I am neither depressed nor elated by his charge that the view is 40 years old, for I see no reason to believe that either consistency or inconsistency is a test of truth or that views held in 1905 must be false in 1945 or *vice versa*. And if I have misunderstood him, I do not apologise; the onus of making himself understood is upon the author.

But I cannot allow Dr. Cobban to ride off on the pretence that it was I who began the talk about the 'rights' of States. It was he, not I, who wrote his book, and it was he, not I, who wrote:

'. . . there has long been a prejudice in the favour of the rights of small independent States.' and

'To sum up, we may say that the rights and responsibilities of the Great Powers extend to the maintenance of their strategic interests, the prevention of war, the safeguarding of their domestic security, and the promotion of economic progress.'

It is rather late in the day for him to say that when he wrote 'rights and responsibilities,' he meant only responsibilities, because a 'right' is 'better called a responsibility.' And if a Great Power has the 'responsibility' of maintaining its own strategic interests and promoting its own economic progress, but it is "a prejudice" to believe in a similar 'responsibility' for the small State, is not this to accept the view that 'the powerful State inevitably will and therefore must use its power to determine its relations with weak States?"—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

SCOTTISH CULTURE

SIR,—While warmly agreeing with much of Mr. Hunter Diack's letter in your issue of April 21st, especially in his appreciation of Norman MacKenzie's article on the Motherwell election, I would suggest that he has rather oversimplified the issues.

It is true that Scotland's tragedy is essentially a cultural one, but is the culture of the country in fact in the state of advanced disintegration he suggests?

First of all take the press. The public reached by the *Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald* is certainly limited numerically, but it is widespread and qualitatively very influential. Moreover, both these newspapers have evening subsidiaries with very considerable local circulations. More important is the fact that the publishers of the *Glasgow Herald* also produce that excellent and shrewdly independent daily, *The Bulletin*, whose circulation is, so I have been told on good authority, second only to the *Daily Express* in Scotland. *The Bulletin* is, in my view, the most intelligently edited penny daily in Scotland, is progressive, democratic and Scottish in outlook; and for a penny paper it provides its readers with an astonishingly rich background to the daily news. There are also the twopenny weeklies published by the Thomson Leng group in Dundee. *The Weekly News*—rich in honest-to-God, salty vernacular humour, and with a wide working-class circulation—and *The Sunday Post*, somewhat similar. And lastly there are the monthlies, the *Scottish Field*, the *S.M.T. Magazine*, *The New Alliance*, *The Scots Magazine*, *To-day and To-morrow* and the *North-East Review*; all of which have a wholesome Scottish outlook and good sa'es.

Against these is the influence of the press tied to one or other of the combines or "Press Lords," and it must be admitted that the effect of the intervention

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Author of SEVEN RED SUNDAYS *and* A MAN'S PLACE

JONATHAN CAPE

of such as the Kemsley interest in Scottish journalism, has been excessively provincialising in the worst sense, as Mr. Diack in Aberdeen will know only too well. Lord Beaverbrook's interest in Scottish affairs seems to be perfunctory and fitful, and guided by no particular policy except desire for circulation.

But the influence of the BBC, with its pathetically limited and timid ideas of what can or cannot be broadcast from Scottish stations, is probably the most baneful and insidious of all. We certainly hope that before long the two new Scottish M.P.s recently elected, both of whom are members of the Saltire Society, will do something in Parliament to secure the provision of a more vigorous and independent Scottish radio service—never more necessary than in a period of reconstruction.

One interesting pointer to the trend of public opinion is the astonishing increase in the number and sales of Scottish books in recent years. One well-known Edinburgh publisher told me a few years ago that he never expected to sell more than 1,000 copies of any new Scottish book. The situation is very different now. One history of modern Scotland, priced at little less than £1, has sold to the tune of several thousands in two and a half years. We cannot keep Saltire Society publications in print. Ian Finlay's excellent little O.U.P. book on Scotland went out of print almost immediately it was published, and the sales of Scottish contemporary fiction and poetry reflect the same wholesome public interest.

The movement is under way right enough: the difficulty is rather to keep pace with it.

The Saltire Society, Edinburgh 1. ROBERT HURD, *President*

INFLUENCE OF PICASSO

SIR,—Your critic deserves my thanks for drawing my attention to an error of fact in Mr. Michael Ayrton's broadcast in the series "The Arts." Picasso has been a major influence in the development of my painting.

In his reply to the remarks in Mr. Sackville West's article, Mr. Ayrton refers to a private conversation in which he quotes me as saying that I am unaware of any specific Picasso influence in my recent paintings.

This shows how necessary it is to make one's meaning precise. The operative word is *specific*. In this conversation I did want to make clear that I was unconscious of a specific influence, though Mr. Ayrton appeared then to hold the opposite view. I went on to say just in what way I had been influenced.

Mr. Ayrton must have misunderstood me. It would be absurd in a short letter to attempt a definition of the various ways in which a painter can be influenced. But I suggest herewith some ways—their boundaries are elastic, and elements of all three ways I should like to mention, may be found in one.

A painter can borrow forms.

In doing this he can hope to imitate the look of works by an esteemed painter and so hope to secure some of that esteem—or again, he can borrow in such a way as to further a firm artistic purpose of his own. This is a risky proceeding, but justifiable in good and intelligent hands.

Then he can be influenced through idolatry for another painter, and, if this happens to run concurrently with discoveries and enthusiasms of his own on lines similar to those used by the painter idolised, the result may be authentic and good. But this kind of influence can be a trap.

Finally, a painter may be influenced via a way of thinking which an older artist has opened up. Such a way of thinking may be then perfected with some sort of finality (there is a host of examples in history)—or it may lead to a development of it which, in turn, may lead to a further new way of thinking. This is the method of tradition and, so it seems to me, is a logical and inevitable kind of influence.

Mr. Ayrton says he thinks I am more influenced by Blake, Palmer, and Turner than Picasso. I have been influenced by these painters, but I cannot and do not intend to weigh precisely the degree of their impact on my thought as compared with the impact of Picasso.

One more point—rather beside the main issue, but one which I would be grateful if you would allow me to make. Mr. Ayrton advises his generation to look at nature and painters deeply concerned with nature—of course—but Picasso, so he says, is not.

Surely Picasso is, at his best, concerned deeply with nature. He has admitted this concern (conversation with Zervos—several passages), and it is just this fact which opens such a vast gulf between him and his imitators, who are not.

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

SIR FRANCIS ROSE

SIR,—It may be of interest to examine the facts in this little controversy. A Franco-American Cultural Group, having seen some paintings by Sir Francis Rose, wrote to ask him whether he would agree to a show in Paris. He naturally welcomed the idea, but saw no means of transporting the pictures, whereupon the Americans in their enthusiasm collected the pictures from him and arranged for their transport to Paris.

It may also be of interest that the Americans are still enthusiastic and are sending the paintings which remain unsold to San Francisco.

LEONARD GREAVES
The Central Institute of Art and Design

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "At last some light on how Sir Francis Rose obtained priority of transport over all other English painters! I am all for enthusiasm, but is an undefined 'Franco-American Cultural Group' the right body to decide which English painter should receive so outstanding a privilege? The French may suppose that Sir Francis enjoys among English painters a paramount position; and, being myself an enthusiast for Franco-British friendship, I consider such a misapprehension would be most unfortunate."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

DE VALERA AND L.G.

SIR,—With reference to "Critic's" story about the first meeting between Mr. De Valera and Mr. Lloyd George, I am afraid that I must draw the line at his using my name to support either his version or Mr. Churchill's which, incidentally, are not quite the same.

In an account given in *Peace by Ordeal* (1935) which, as far as I know, has not been challenged since, I concluded: "We have tried to make sense of the Churchillian narrative. But it seems that in fact the whole emphasis of the interview was different, and that Lloyd George was not in fact guilty of the indescribable folly attributed to him by Churchill of trying to embarrass or discomfort the guest with whom he was hoping to arrange a settlement. Lloyd George seems on the contrary to have tried his hardest to establish a Celtic affinity between himself and De Valera, and with this in mind to have tried to ridicule the pre-war Irish Party for ignorance of their own language, and the slow Anglo-Saxons who had, however, the wit to appoint a Celt their Prime Minister."

As the book is out of print and therefore perhaps inaccessible to him, it is charitable to assume that "Critic" was invoking my authority without the slightest recollection of what I actually said. I have had sufficient experience of his sprightly and civilised conversation to feel that he does himself an injustice in describing this exploded old chestnut as one of his favourite yarns.

FRANK PAKENHAM

DR. WILLIAM TEMPLE

SIR,—I have undertaken, at Mrs. Temple's request, to write the Life of her husband. Will you kindly allow me to ask for your readers' help? For the loan of any letters written by the Archbishop—which would be copied and returned as soon as possible—and for personal reminiscences of his words and works (especially of his social and industrial sympathies), I should be most grateful.

9, The Close, Lichfield, Staffordshire. F. A. IREMONGER

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Who and what are the Germans? From the time of the rise of Hitler they had receded from the European focus, and now they are no more than shapes seen in a fog. After 5 years it has been possible only to imagine these people; on the one hand, to picture ant-like creatures thousands of feet above us in the electric light of their aircraft as they flew over our towns; on the other to think of distorted phantasms that crawl like "slimy things with legs" out of the news and the propaganda. But now we have crossed the rivers into Germany we have to face the reality; we are obliged to see real Germans with our own eyes once more. Here the prisoners, the foreign workers and the inhabitants of the liberated countries who have been seeing the Germans for five years are many moves ahead of the English and Americans, and it is an advantage to have seen one's enemy. The imagination is freed of obsessions. The mind is filled with facts. I was for a short time in France and the tame frontier country of Luxembourg, and I noticed that the hatred of Germany, like the contempt for Germans, was far beyond anything that exists in this country. It was a hatred far more exact and concrete than ours, and more discriminating. In Luxembourg, a German-looking city where all the roofs and spires look like casques and helmets under the wearying winter sky of the north, the mild people know precisely which Germans they want to punish and what their crimes were. The horrors of the camps were not a morning newspaper sensation, but a continuous whisper directed to their ears from just over the frontier. The people of the occupied countries distinguish between the stupid and correct German soldier—"Il y en avait qui étaient bons"—and the S.S., the "yellows." The chemist a few doors from the Gestapo building recalls the two "yellows" who came in one morning to ask if he had "something that would remove bloodstains from floors." You see the German dossiers with their miserable photographs and their tedious police commentary. One house in three in the city of Luxembourg had a son, a husband, a daughter, or a wife, deported into Germany. The rich manufacturer and the poor workman had suffered alike, not in the cold sweat of war, as we have suffered, but in the tepid, methodical silent terror of the deportations. The hatred of the liberated countries has teeth; and it knows exactly what it wants to seize.

And so one crosses the frontier. I remember my first Germans, a group of half a dozen or so fat, sick faces looking out of the broken window of a wrecked cottage, stunned by the roar of our tanks. I remember a thick, sullen countrywoman with a pail in her hand, waiting to get through the traffic to the water running away from a broken water pipe. Especially clear in my memory are a young couple with rucksacks on their backs among the ruins of a dead town on the Moselle, who wandered without aim about the streets. They would disappear and then, turned back by some building that had fallen across the street, they would reappear, to be lost once more in their mysterious attempt to get to some spot they knew of in the rubbish heap. They did not look at us; nor did we look at them until their backs were turned. Patrols did not challenge them. They walked away cutting the soles of their shoes on the powdered glass that was as thick as a frost, and we felt no hatred for them, but something beyond hatred: indifference, a total failure to make the process of comprehension work. Even the casual gunfire opening and slamming an iron door over our heads failed to bind us with the common hankering of frightened eyes. The couple went off and they were nothing, people going nowhere, cut off from the curiosity of an enemy. We had made a wilderness of their town; did these newly made vagrants understand that they had made a wilderness of our hearts? Did they know why they were hated, or why we would not know on what basis to begin with them? A cellarful of new wooden-handled whips, each with seven leather thongs, had just been found in this town. They were light to handle and fresh from the manufacturer. What would the young couple have said about that? Would we have believed what they told us? Would we have acquitted them or wouldn't we? They have become an intolerable burden upon the European mind; and it is evident from the reports of the last two or three weeks that they have little conception of what the rest of Europe knows about them; and knowing, feels.

Is it possible now to begin at the beginning of this unbearable subject again and to form a picture of the German character? I have tried two Germanys lately, the Germany which Mme de Staël revealed excitedly to the world in 1813 and which had poured the fertilising flood of the Romantic movement upon Europe. *De L'Allemagne* is not a book one can read to the end; but it shows what was felt about Germany. Its liberality, its independence, its imagination, its sensibility, the poetic vagueness of the German nature, were admired. They were qualities which atoned for the lack of society, the lack of standards of taste, the lack of conversation, the languor of German nationalism, the feebleness of the warlike spirit. In Mme de Staël one might be listening to a friendly if patronising German lecturing the French of 1940. To her it seemed that the people of the North, who had at one time conquered the world, had gone from their own country and left only relics behind them, so that the towns were nothing but museums of the age of chivalry. One walked, as in a museum, among the dead, amid the too vivid and frozen actions of the past.

One reads these warm impressions, of course, in order to see if the beginnings of Germany will disclose any hint of what was to come. Imagination rather than sense, Mme de Staël thought, was the decisive German quality; but how to control and appoint the necessary limits to a faculty which loses itself in the clouds, disappears into the depths, exalts and abases itself and finally disintegrates because of its lack of self-criticism? There is a hint in that. And another in this curious passage:

> When it comes to action, the Germans have no idea of how to struggle with difficulties; and they respect power not because of self-interest but because power appears to them in the guise of destiny.

The split character of modern Germany is already detected in the Germany of Goethe:

> On est frappé sans cesse, en Allemagne, du contraste qui existe entre les sentiments et les habitudes, entre les talents et les goûts: la civilisation et la nature semblent ne s'être pas encore bien amalgamées ensemble. Quelquefois des hommes très vrais sont affectés dans leurs expressions et dans leur physionomie, comme s'ils avaient quelque chose à cacher: quelque fois, au contraire, la douceur de l'âme n'empêche pas la rudesse dans les manières; souvent même cette opposition va plus loin encore, et la faiblesse du caractère se fait voir à travers un langage et des formes dures.

There is a gulf between their spirit and their character, and while their spirit refuses to have bounds set upon it, the character will submit to any yoke. The audacious mind rarely gives courage to the timid and slave-like nature. The Germans can deal with the clouds. They cannot deal with men. The lack of society ensures that; and indeed they fear to displease more than they desire to please.

Those observations of Mme de Staël's were made before the rise of German militarism; or rather they were made by a woman who was poor in political sense and who did not see that already the spirit was beginning to stir. For the Germans of our time we have to turn to a book like Jacques Rivière's *L'Allemand**, which was published in 1918. It was written after four years in a German prison camp. Jacques Rivière was the founder of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. A few years after the war, at the time when writers were beginning to work for Franco-German friendship, his book was reissued with a preface which suggested that the portrait had been too severe and suffered from the bitterness of the war. And it is true that one may define a character exactly and yet fail to understand it because one has detached it from history and institutions and has deprived it of movement. Rivière belonged to the generation that ignored the social and non-individual part of human beings; that part of us which is made entirely of other people. All the same, the present war has more than justified M. Rivière's analysis and has made his apology look like self-deception. The only criticism one need make of his book is that it unconsciously draws the portrait of a Frenchman which "shows through" the page and imposes its image on the German. He is, for example, shocked by the lack of *amour propre* in the Germans and by their naïve indifference to ridicule. He is shocked by the German deference to their prisoners; but that deference, a kind of guilt, is a general human trait. We are all ashamed of war. With its rigid orderliness, its passionate lucidity, its sense that everything in life dwells within limits that the intellect must define, *L'Allemand* is French to a fault.

The lethargy and the dreaminess which Mme de Staël saw in the Germans appeared to Jacques Rivière as the almost infinite vacancy of the German character. By instinct the German knows nothing but what he is ordered or taught. If he has not been taught to react against the horrors of Buchenwald—Rivière would no doubt say to-day—the German will not instinctively react. Rivière in his prison camp saw the German as a man who neither desires, dreams, loves nor hates, a man without affective apparatus, and who is unable to see his true relations with people. Compare the blank, visionary remarks by German civilians when they were taken to see the horrors of the prison camps: "A German does not do these things." There is, Rivière concludes, a hole or gap in the German nature which may be compared with Mme de Staël's sense of the gulf between spirit and character: and in that hole there is just simply nothing. Or nothing which can be morally defined. Mechanically they work up their rages, they ingratiate by rote, they forget their cruelties the moment they have committed them, Rivière thought. Nothing embarrasses them so completely as the necessity of making a moral judgment, for instinct does not inform their sense of good and evil. Painfully it must be learned; naïvely, without embarrassment, they will recognise they are mistaken. French vanity would find this hard. Initiative—as Mme de Staël said—the Germans have acquired their morality without feeling it. In the last war, Rivière points out, the Germans failed entirely to put forward an independent moral conception of their own cause; the most they could do was to answer ours. (The Nazis were clever enough to see this weakness but, unable to build up a moral case, they presented an anti-moral and mystical one.) According to Rivière's analysis the German fills the vacuum left by his moral incompetence with the notion of "the possible." It is not a question of what is good or bad, false or true, but of what can be done. In the attitude to prisoners of war, for example, it was not a question of the right or wrong way of treating them: the decision was that it was impossible, owing to serious international difficulties, to maltreat the soldiers of the Western Powers; but possible, because of the weakness of their governments, to starve and work the Russians, Serbs and Rumanians to death.

Such a flat, vacant and negative character, so terrifying in its featureless attitude to action, might explain German failures and atrocities, but cannot explain German successes and the peculiar richness of the German nature which Rivière was compelled to praise. The strength which morality fails to give the German, Rivière concluded, was supplied by a phenomenal and fertile will.

> Il est comme le jeune Siegfried dans la forêt: il ne sait rien, il ne comprend rien, il écoute les voix du vent et de la nature, et il rit sans savoir pourquoi. Tout son bien, ce sont ses muscles

* *L'Allemand*. By Jacques Rivière. Gallimard.

bien formés et cette âme bien unie qu'il se sent. Mais l'oiseau l'instruit ; le hasard le met à l'école de cette voix savante ; le monde s'ouvre à lui, avec toutes ses possibilités ; il voit l'or dans les profondeurs, et en lui découvre cet or cent fois plus précieux, cent fois plus fin, plus ductile et plus malléable, l'or de son âme sans préférence et sans défaut, de son âme prête à tout. Il l'extrait d'abord et se met à le forger ; à grands coups de marteau sur l'enclume, avec un chant candide, féroce et joyeux, le jeune Siegfried forge son âme qui n'était rien du tout et il en fait un tas de choses. Il en fait, au fûr et à mesure, tout ce dont il a besoin. Elle n'est jamais finie ; elle n'atteint jamais sa forme, ni sa limite. A chaque demande des circonstances, il n'a qu'à la retourner sur l'établi avec sa pince. Le métal est encore chaud ; il s'étend, il s'étire, il reçoit tous les prolongements qu'il fait. Et bien malin sera celui qui jamais dénoncera le raccord.

L'Allemand is a hostile analysis. It is not a false one, it is simply one of many analyses. I have indicated some of its features. I have not touched upon Rivière's criticism of German nationalist philosophy, and specially that interesting part of it which, from time to time, in every generation, leans towards Russia rather than to the complete civilisation of the West. The present war has confirmed Rivière's view, and had he lived he would have been able to draw upon Nazi sources and make his case formidable in places where it is now too pernickety in its logic. Rivière himself felt there was something inadequate in a formal analysis of the German character. Was it not like pure morality passing judgment on pure will, pure sense passing judgment on pure imagination? Was it not futile for an ancient culture, teaching that we must define and accept, to complain of a culture which values things only for what they may become? One comes back to what had struck Mme de Staël and all travellers before her and since: the lack of a society. And we are seeing again the cause of it: the desolation of the Thirty Years' War is once more before our eyes. Can the Germans cure themselves, by reliving that experience, this time with their eyes open?

V. S. PRITCHETT

NEW VERSE

Poems 1941-1944. By HARRY BROWN. *Secker and Warburg.* 6*s.*

Selected Poems of Hugh MacDiarmid. *Maclellan.* 6*s.*

Poetry Scotland. *Maclellan.* 6*s.*

The Bridge, Poems 1939-1944. By RUTH PITTER. *Cresset Press.* 5*s.*

Tribute to the Angels. By H. D. *Oxford University Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Sphere of Glass, and Other Poems. By JOHN LEHMANN. *Hogarth Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

How is it we haven't heard more of Mr. Harry Brown? Until the publication here of his novel, *Walk in the Sun*—remarkable by all accounts—his name was unknown to me, and that not merely because I am a lukewarm prospector of American verse. Nothing of his, for example, appeared in Mr. Oscar Williams's *The Book of New Poems*, 1943 (Howell Soskin), a fairly representative collection. *Poems* 1941-1944, a choice from three published volumes, reveals him as a poet of unusual talent; he is, let us say, an American Sidney Keyes, less enchanting, more mature, and happily still alive. The war which has formed him is at first anticipated in small ways:

> The hunger in the meadows is an omen
> Of what will bring the lion and lynx and wolf
> And hollow-haunting owl to awful life.
> In the dead center of the sibilant night
> Deaths build their pyramid within the wood,
> Among the sounds of sorrow and of sleep.
>
> The builders of the monument forget,
> And those of whom the monument is built,
> Bone over bone, bone buried under bone,
> Have no life to remember. Carols the cold-throated, king-torn nightingale, a voice
> Versed in the arts of mourning, and resigned. . . .

"Bone"—deftly reiterated in one of these lines—is a word that gathers meaning as war draws near and engulfs.

> Soon the continents will groan
> For a harvesting of bone

in another poem is followed later by the battle-shocked men in Italy.

> . . . Their uniforms were merely a disguise
> That kept the naked earth from knowing naked bone.

The uncommon writer knows how to appropriate the common word: anyone can stake out a claim with far-fetched epithets. The poem from which the last two lines have been quoted has reached the war in a stride. "Incident on a Front not far from Castel di Sangro" makes the onlooker pause and read again. Not that its broken minds and bodies are more compelling than those of the newsreel: we have all seen close-ups of a Nazi soldier raving mad after bombardment and heard the commentator's "*This* Jerry would seem to have had enough!" A week or two ago Universal Talking News showed us the entry into blasted German towns, the dead in the streets, the refugees, to the accompaniment of words that would have fitted a Derby Day tour of Epsom. Such atrocities of journalism need to be redressed, by Owen's blind men in the sun, by Mr. Harry Brown's *Incident on a Front* and *The Conquerors*. That the chatty insult goes out to millions, while the poem reaches only a few thousands, cannot be helped. Some talking news reporter of the 1980's may feel unwillingly the pressure of war poetry being written to-day.

The metre of *Incident on a Front* is that of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a form whose gravity has a particular appeal for the present (the most sustained passage, it will be remembered, of Mr. Eliot's *Four Quartets* is an adaptation). Mr. Harry Brown employs it lightly, discreetly; as, elsewhere, the sonnet-form, without academic emphasis, is made a useful container. A varied technical skill is, indeed, one of the attractions of this poet, and he has written one of the few successful poems since Owen in which half-rhymes do not lapse into assonance. His tone, despite varieties of mood, is unmistakable:

> Sun valley is silent, the skis are very quiet,
> Though quick blades murmur her name across the ice,
> And remembering pine trees take up the name and sigh it,
> But they do not sigh it twice.
>
> She is gone, she is gone, says the condor beyond the Andes;
> Departed, departed, says the safe Scottish grouse;
> Gone, too, says a gull at Cannes, are the gaudy dandies
> From her empty house . . .
>
> —*Epitaph for a Fashionable Lady.*
>
> There is, in these countries, darkness.
> *No honour at all.*
> In dun sunlight, dark days, dour weather,
> When trees hover, leaves go limp, rain reconnoiters,
> Then hangs heavy, a plum, the hot soul, in seething silence,
> Sorrowing for the affairs of man, the broken brightness, the burst
> Vessel, cessation of *virtu*, collapse of valour.
> O languish
> The physicians and pale the frail medicines go.
> In the dark days the carts come out calling the dead
> From hearth, from harbour, from the horrible Actual,
> And the rat-catcher roams the street, and the cold clean cats
> Their jealous eyes blink.
>
> —*The Conquerors.*

I prefer myself the freer rhapsodical rhythms of the last quotation to his strait metres. English poetic tradition means very little to American poets who remain American (as Mr. Brown does); what weighs with them, like a Bible, is Whitman—Whitman, in Mr. Brown's case, packed closer by Hopkins and Auden. Only natural energy can reconcile poetry and rhetoric, cleverness and simplicity, and Mr. Brown has it in plenty.

One point. In enjoying American verse how many English readers, I wonder, think to transmute the vowel sounds into American? There is quite a difference in lines where the nasal intonation predominates: in "Had the fox his fangs then?" for example. I raise this point because much American verse looks like English verse, and it is as well at times to remember the distinction. No such compunction need trouble the reader of Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid and his fellow Scots, many of whom write in a dialect horrifying to the eye.

> An tho fordelyd langin rocht my hert . . .

It looks as unlike English as possible. Why shouldn't it? But why should we go on reading? The nationalism behind it all may be less phoney than I suppose, but if genuine, it is obviously not for export. Some of the verse in *Poetry Scotland* is in Gaelic, some in local Scots dialect, some in a vocabulary based on Middle Scots (variant, apparently, of Middle English), and the rest in an English that looks rather tame among hirsute neighbours. Of those who employ English, Mr. Edwin Muir enjoys a lonely distinction; adept in all tongues is Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid. I suspect that "Scottish nationalism" of the poetic kind is merely a reflection of Mr. MacDiarmid's personal and explosive talent. But in his case, the burr of words falls into order:

> At darknin hings abune the howff
> A weet and wild and eisenen air . . .

So begins the spirited version of a poem by Blok, and long before one has discovered the sense of "eisenen" (yearning) it has fixed itself in one's mind as the right word in the right place. Methods are justified by results, and if we can't read Mr. MacDiarmid with the aid of the glossary, so much the worse for us. His *Selected Poems* seem to have been well chosen from a continent in which I have never found it possible to travel far, particularly in the regions Marxist and geological. But nearly all the pieces reprinted here compress a passion admirably. Neat and furious, sweet, rollicking, harsh, he is master of his lingos, and one of the very few living poets who can deliver himself naturally in a ballad. I shall keep this little volume as a guide in (to me) difficult country: the language barrier, as with Chaucer, remains.

The Bridge, *Tribute to the Angels*, and *The Sphere of Glass* give us further instalments of their authors' talents. Mrs. Pitter rejoices some; those, I suspect, who need a chapel to go to, where they can examine the stained glass; no light, however, comes through the windows. The craftsmanship is there, that would ravish in a poem by Mr. Blunden or Mr. Andrew Young; no light, though. Not, at any rate, for me. But "H. D." retains a curious transparent glitter; I am not sure that, limited though the resources, her recent poetry isn't her best. She writes now in tiny coupled lines that fall easily like drops of water; the once hard-frozen sense flows on, from couplet to couplet, poem to poem. *Tribute to the Angels*, a refraction of the war in secret, delights coolly. *The Sphere of Glass* adds eleven poems to the small corpus of its author's published work. Mr. Lehmann has the double distinction of being an alert critic and a serious if sometimes constrained poet. A walk in the woods, a lodging in a house no longer ours, the death of friends can move both him and us. But war, with its suppressed hysteria, brings also odd lapses. "The Ballad of Jack at the World's End" shocks me, among verses so carefully written and chosen, by its chinking vulgarity. Mr. Lehmann with the severe editorial brow would have turned it down, I'm sure.

G. W. STONIER

CLEOPATRA'S NOSE

The Hero in History. By SIDNEY HOOK. *Secker and Warburg.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Any book which sets out to discuss the *If* in history or the part played in it by great men is sure to wake up a dozen old feuds. It is much safer to tread on the corns of an historian than on his opinions. Ever since Pascal wondered whether the length of Cleopatra's nose had made any difference to the fate of Rome there has been no theoretical struggle more fierce than that

between the determinist philosophers and the partisans of heroic grandeur. In an age like the present, one view may land a man in jail, and another put him behind a Ministerial desk. When the spotlight of publicity and the responsibility of decision rest upon men of the calibre of Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin, it is natural that people should speculate just how much influence the "great man" can exert over the course of events or what would have happened if, for instance, Hitler had been killed in the Munich *Putsch* of 1923 or Churchill had been speared by a dervish at Omdurman. Would things have been essentially different? How can the appearance of these men at the centres of power be explained? Pure chance? Or do they meet the requirements of some deep law of history?

Before Mr. Hook attempts to make his own specific contribution to the vast literature on this subject, he very properly adopts the critical device of exploding the views of his predecessors. But I am not sure how far he is justified in indulging himself in a series of quixotic battles against windmills that were demolished long ago. A critic may legitimately tilt at far-fetched interpretations of history in order to show that they explain very little and to clear up some points of definition; he should not carry his polemic to the point where he endows them with an importance they do not possess. Mr. Hook, for example, devotes ten pages to the theory of Frederick Adams Wood, the American author of a book called *The Influence of Monarchs*—a detailed study of 386 sovereigns in Western Europe from the eleventh century to the French Revolution. Wood's ideas are certainly diverting rubbish, but do they deserve so much of Mr. Hook's attention?

Naturally, it is useful to be given a summary of what the more important philosophers believe about the role of the individual in history. But Mr. Hook's treatment of them is so uneven that it affects the balance of his entertaining book.

There are, nevertheless, parts of this essay which are skilfully written and deserve study. Mr. Hook distinguishes between the different types of "great man"—the influential author or artist, the religious prophet or reformer, the historical hero. How can we explain their power? Indeed, are they *powerful* in the sense that history would have taken a different turn but for their activities? Then we have to explain why they behaved as they did; what freedom of choice they had within the framework of their time; what made people ready to listen to their opinions, march in their armies and obey their laws. Hegel, aiming his philosophy at the eighteenth-century rationalists who explained history in terms of good or bad luck or personal psychology, argued that every age got the great man it deserved. But what it deserved depended upon the shape of a predetermined pattern of history; the man who could perceive this pattern and translate it into political action was assured of greatness. Thus, as Mr. Hook points out, Hegel is insisting that

> The great man can do only what his culture permits but *the culture permits of only one direction of development.* There are no genuine alternatives.

That is the crux of the matter. Either there is more than one path of development open to a society at a given time—in which case the acts of individuals will be decisive in some form—or a law of historical progress must be produced to prove that human desires and actions do not materially influence the march of events, whose general shape must be predetermined. But it is also possible to lay considerable stress upon the impersonal factors and still leave room for human choice between alternatives. This argument insists that the social relations of any society set the stage on which human beings have relative liberty to act, but that the changes of scenery are due to laws of historical motion to which human initiative is irrelevant.

No one has yet found a satisfactory answer to this dilemma. Mr. Hook criticises Marxism—which provides a working if incomplete explanation—for inconsistency in asserting the *inevitability* of socialism whilst emphasising that men can make their own history. Since this question is fundamental for our society, it is a pity that Mr. Hook contents himself with a logical *reductio ad absurdum*. Having skated away from the problem at this point he never succeeds in getting to grips with it again. For though he has his own formulation to put forward, it is little more than a useful piece of definition, dividing heroes into "eventful" and "event-making" men. The first is a figure whose actions influenced those and that which came after him more by accident of his position than by conscious design; on the other hand, the actions of the second are "the consequences of outstanding capacities of intelligence, will and character."

And there, with very little elaboration, Mr. Hook leaves us. As far as I can see, his analysis of the relation of these "eventful" and "event-making" men to the great processes of social and historical change does not add anything to the Marxist position that he rejects and, at some points, is much more questionable. As an example of his method, Mr. Hook examines the part played by Lenin in the Russian Revolution. To say the least, some facts which he selects as evidence are highly disputed and his conclusions do not always follow from his argument. It is stretching the *If* a long way to say that without the Soviet Revolution there would have been no economic crisis in the late Twenties or that Fascism would not have developed as a mass movement. Yet in spite of its weaknesses this book will make the reader re-examine his own views with a critical eye.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

AN ANARCHIST SAINT

David Eder: Memoirs of a Modern Pioneer. Edited by J. B. HOBMAN. Foreword by Sigmund Freud. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It was towards the end of the first decade of the present century that I first met David Eder. From then until his death at the age of seventy I was privileged to be on intimate terms with him and his wife. His widow, Edith Eder, died but a few months ago. She was a sister of Sir Sidney Low, Florence Low and Barbara Low, all well known in their several spheres. Mr. J. B. Hobman, who is responsible for assembling this volume of memoirs, knew Eder only for the last ten years of his life. This fact makes all the more notable his insight into Eder's character and the accuracy of his estimate of his wisdom. Most people who knew Eder at all intimately agree that as a man of character—and, curiously enough, of what we call English character—he was outstanding.

Montague David Eder was born seventy-nine years ago, in the London street now known as Endsleigh Gardens. His father was a successful diamond merchant; both his parents being Jewish, of a generous and homely type. A generation or two earlier his ancestors came from the Lithuanian part of Old Russia in Czarist days, when Jews were subject to much persecution and repeated pogroms. Eder has told me how, as a schoolboy, he experienced a good deal of "petty persecution" from his schoolmates, as a Jew, even in London of the Seventies. Later, as a medical student, he lodged in Gordon Street with his cousin, Israel Zangwill, the novelist. The two cousins remained close friends until Zangwill's death, ten years before Eder himself died. In the course of an obituary notice in *New Judæa*, Eder tells of his first meeting with his cousin. From that notice

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we get an intimate and revealing picture:

> We first met on a long-ago afternoon when I, visiting an aunt who then lived in Victoria Park, found a long, ungainly figure sprawling in an armchair, upsetting his tea, pouring out a flood of puns and philosophy to a bevy of girls. They were all pleasant girls, pretty, charmingly musical; but, at a period in the 1880's when girls disliked puns and philosophy, we were soon left alone. Our friendship and comradeship begun then can now end only with my death.

Eder took his London B.Sc. degree in 1891, and then entered Bart's for his medical education. He qualified in '95, "after many failures," and no wonder. For in '89 he was secretary of the Bloomsbury Socialist Society, and actively concerned with all that crowd of early Bloomsbury Socialists, Hyndman, and Morris, and Dr. Aveling, who had married Eleanor Marx. He was one of the first members of the Fabian Society and, later, of the I.L.P. Of those zoological resemblances which we are all said to possess, Eder had an almost absurd likeness to the traditional elephant. His wisdom, his sagacity, his patience, his good-humour, even his heavily built but loose-limbed figure in its easy-fitting grey clothes, and his quizzical eye, recalled his animal counterpart.

I have used up so much of my space in talking about his more youthful days that I have little room to do more than hint at the work of Eder's later life. Its variety can be judged by some of the chapter headings of the book: "Travel and Revolution in the Andes"; "Three Thousand Miles up the Amazon"; "Eder as Psychoanalyst"; "Eder as Zionist"; "Friends, Patients and Refugees." Wherever there was trouble and difficulty you would find David Eder in battle-dress; a giant in bulk and strength, physical and mental, yet gentle and tender as a mother; a vigorous and candid speaker, yet almost shy and, unless deeply stirred, unassertive. Leonard Stein has told us that, though his enthusiasm was for the Jewish cause, "Eder was not content with formal expressions of sympathy with Arab national aspirations. From the time of his first introduction to political work in Palestine he made it his business to cultivate friendly relations with such Arab circles as were accessible. Not long before his final departure from Palestine it looked for a moment as though his work might at length bear fruit." That the fruit never matured was no fault of Eder's, but of those thoughtless enthusiasts who did not know the meaning of tolerance.

It will be seen that this is a most interesting and valuable book. It will appeal to every socialist of whatever school, to every Jew—indeed, to everyone, Jew or Gentile, whose mind and memories respond to such names and words as Kropotkin, Cunninghame-Graham, *Green Mansions*, Freud, William Morris, Zangwill and Zionism. We owe a debt to Mrs. Eder for having preserved valuable memoranda, to Mr. Hobman for having carefully, and with such sympathy and understanding, done the work of assembling the material; and to the publisher for the reasonable price of the book.

HARRY ROBERTS

THE BLACK ART

Witchcraft in England. By CHRISTINA HOLE. *Batsford.* 21s.

"How ill you're looking!" we say on meeting someone against whom we bear a long-standing grudge; spite, ill-concealed by a gelid film of sympathy, glitters beadily in the plump pupil of our eye. In an instant our enemy's face falls—the cheeks blanch, the mouth sags, the eyes fill with anxiety. "Yes, I'm afraid perhaps . . . just lately . . . ." We pass on, satisfied: our black spell has worked.

The history of witchcraft is one long testimony to the power of the will. To quote Miss Hole at the outset:

> That the rites practised by malicious witches seem to modern eyes mere superstitious mummery, based on entirely wrong premises, does not affect the criminal nature of their actions. Given a belief that to make a clay or wax image of a man will compass his death, the making of such an image is as much murder, at least in intent, as stabbing him with a dagger or poisoning his food. . . . Faith, like magic, works both ways and can kill as well as cure.

Faith, therefore, not only in the witch's own will, but in a transcendent Being who would assist it, in exchange for an eventual reversion. Fausts, male and female, belong essentially to the Christian era; but, as Miss M. A. Murray reminded us some time ago, witchcraft has its roots in Paganism, and the fantastic amalgam of beliefs and practices which came to a head round about the turn of the sixteenth century and which forms the basic material of Miss Hole's intelligent and fascinating book, represents a tightly woven fabric of poetry, religion, science, folk-lore, obscenity and the sombre desires of lonely, distracted souls. Lonely and distracted because cut off from the rest of humanity: to become a witch was, and is, an act of voluntary renunciation, undertaken through despair. Hence the hermaphroditic tendency, rightly emphasised in Mervyn Peake's numerous illustrations to this book. The witch divests herself of that which should distinguish her—namely, her sex. The phenomenon is not invariable: Isobel Gowdie, the beautiful young Scottish witch who was hanged after voluntary confession in 1662, is a striking exception to which Miss Hole draws attention. Her references to this extraordinary woman make me wish that she had devoted rather more space to her and the details of her confession. When you have a quantity of material at your command, it always seems a pity to waste any of it; yet I cannot help feeling that this book would have been even better than it is if the author had taken a few test cases and dwelt upon them at length, instead of stringing together example after example in the manner which renders that masterpiece, *The Golden Bough*, so difficult to read continuously. Had she chosen this method, Miss Hole might have found it easier to reach a definite conclusion; in effect, I found it impossible to discover what it is she really believes, for at one moment she recounts the most fantastic details as facts, and at others seems to regard the whole business as so much mumbo-jumbo. Perhaps she agrees with Addison, who wrote: "I believe in general that there is . . . such a thing as Witchcraft; but at the same time can give no credit to any particular instance of it." This is hedging, of course, but it accounts for that insoluble residuum of sheer strangeness, which remains after everything has been physically and psychologically docketed. Nature is disconcerting: it is a positive nuisance that charms, iodine lockets, bracelets of corks as a cure for cramp, clairvoyance, blessings and curses should so often *appear* to succeed. The survival of these specifics mocks our hunt for a neat explanation of the world. Miss Hole is evidently aware of the difficulty, but adds to it by accepting without comment such phenomena as the vomiting of metal objects—pins, etc. There is no magic here: hysterical subjects swallow these things, often in astounding quantity, and are sometimes able to disgorge them without injury.

It is, however, impossible to emphasise too strongly that this is in many ways an extremely good book—sane, well written and imaginative. It covers the ground with remarkable thoroughness and is full of suggestive and stimulating correlations.

Mr. Mervyn Peake derives, at a great many removes, from Rembrandt and Callot. In so far as his drawings are emphatic and theatrical, they may be thought worthily to illustrate the subject.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEASANT EUROPE

Economic Development in S.E. Europe. With an Introduction By PROFESSOR DAVID MITRANY. *P.E.P. and Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

This book, the outcome of the work of a private study-group made up of experts drawn mainly from the countries with which it deals, is the best thing so far published about the economic needs and possibilities of the predominantly peasant areas of Eastern and Southern Europe. It is short, and makes no attempt to present detailed plans, being, indeed, a study of guiding principles rather than of their precise application to particular areas; but within its compass it is eminently sensible and realistic. The political issues, though they are evidently destined to play a large part in settling the actual future of this group of countries, are set aside. Unless they had been, it is unlikely that men of varying political views drawn from countries with traditions of keen antagonism could have worked harmoniously together in producing this remarkably objective study. What is actually done is bound to depend largely on politics: what needs doing, from a purely economic standpoint, is pretty much the same everywhere, and whatever political motives may be behind it. Or, rather, it is much the same as soon as it is assumed, as the book does assume throughout, that the most urgent need is to raise the standards of living and the security of the large and rapidly increasing peasant population which has lived hitherto for the most part in a condition of really grinding poverty.

The countries here dealt with are not all equally poor. They range from Czechoslovakia and Austria, with relatively high average standards—low, even so, in comparison with those of the more advanced countries of Western Europe—to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, with their impoverished peasantries right at the bottom of the European income scale. Between these extremes they include Greece and Rumania—estimated before the war to have national incomes a little higher per head of population than Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and also Poland and Hungary, about halfway between the extremes. Such average figures are, of course, misleading if they are taken as indicating the relative standards of the peasants alone. Czechoslovakia and Austria were at the top of the scale mainly because of their urban population, and many Hungarian peasants were certainly worse off than many Rumanians, but, in this as in many other matters, there are no adequate statistics to be had. It is not the least of the services rendered by the compilers of this book to have brought together the available figures and shown where are the chief gaps that need to be filled.

In general, the thesis of Professor Mitrany and his collaborators is that, if the standards of living in S.E. Europe are to be raised, improved agricultural techniques, industrialisation, and better facilities for transport must go together, and there must be both collaboration between the countries as an economic group and a large import of capital from outside it. Stress is laid, too, on the need for an industrialisation guided not by the desires of foreign capitalists seeking to exploit the raw material resources of these countries in their own interests, but by the needs of the internal markets of the group as a whole. It is also frankly recognised that industrialisation of this latter kind will break down unless there is a simultaneous improvement in agricultural productivity and marketing, because without these the internal market cannot expand.

The development of adequate transport, it is urged, is a matter less of new railway building than of greatly improved roads, including local highways; for without these the peasants cannot get their goods to the towns or the ports or be in a position to develop the production of quality foodstuffs to supplement grain crops. The need for skilled labour and for an enlarged supply of technical workers is also stressed. The Universities of the area, it is pointed out, produce in the main students in the arts, for whom there are none too many jobs in after life; they turn out very few scientists or technicians. Similarly, there is no school system of technical education, and what apprenticeship there is is mainly in the handicrafts, which still over a large part of the area employ more workers than large-scale industry. The familiar problem of rural overpopulation in the peasant areas receives its proper degree of emphasis; and so does the abrupt decline of emigration since 1914.

The moral of the study is that all these countries, whatever their political regimes, need to set aside their national antagonisms and to develop closely co-ordinated economic policies, and that the more advanced countries ought, in their own interests as well as in those of peace and humanity, to do everything possible to help their development with capital, not to suit the book of the heavy industries of their own countries, but to contribute to a rapid improvement in the standards of living in the peasant areas. The unspoken conditions needed to make this possible are, first, a really international and disinterested world agency for the promotion of economic development in the backward countries, and, secondly, better and less corrupt government in these countries themselves. Obviously, neither of these can be easy to bring about.

G. D. H. C.

We Were There To Escape. By GEORGE MIKES. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8s. 6d.

The Captain—a nameless Jugoslav officer but, we are assured by the author, a real person—was captured by the Germans after the collapse of Jugoslav resistance and sent to a prison camp in Germany. There, in company with several thousand other prisoners, he suffered from a number of mental and physical hardships, the severest of which was boredom. He made one attempt to escape, but was recaptured after a few hours and subjected to such strict and constant individual supervision that it seemed hopeless to make another attempt. Nevertheless he planned for it with infinite patience and circumspection (which included cultivating the friendship of the fierce bloodhound which had been specially assigned to him) and eventually succeeded. His Odyssey led him through Germany, through France, through Spain, where he spent several months in camps and prisons infinitely worse than the German camp, to safety in England.

These are the bones of the story. But in spite of the author's protestations that apart from being true this one is different, it *is* just another escape story. The Captain was no doubt a very courageous and resourceful man (we are informed in a postscript on the dust jacket that he has since been killed in Jugoslavia), but his experiences do not seem to have differed in essentials from those of many thousands of people. They do not tell us anything new, nor are they written in a novel or interesting manner. And since they are not told directly by the Captain, they lack whatever interest the impact of his personality might have given them. The net result is that there is a curious air of unreality about the book.

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